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CAPTAIN CORAM

FROM AN ENGRAVING (PUBLISHED IN 1796) BY W. NUTTER, AFTER THE PAINTING BY HOGARTH AT THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL. (SEE PAGE 108.)

THOMAS CORAM

CHURCHMAN, EMPIRE BUILDER AND PHILANTHROPIST

BY THE REV.
H. F. B. COMPSTON, M.A.

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IN MEMORIAM

THOMAE CORAM

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H. F. B. C.

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PREFACE

THIS sketch was outlined in a lecture delivered before the Theological Society of King's College, London, in October, 1917, and repeated in a revised form in November, at a public meeting of the Ladies' Association of the Royal Colonial Institute. The subject clearly evoked interest, and many of my hearers expressed a hope that the lecture would be published. In the form in which it now appears it has been possible to enlarge considerably the scope of the work; and several documents are now printed for the first time.

Readers of Brownlow will see that I am much indebted to his—or rather Brocklesby's—summary; but I have, where possible, had recourse to original documentary and other sources, and my aim has been to use the available material in such a way as to give a comprehensive view of Coram's career as fully as it can, with our present knowledge, be traced.

The work was begun as an introduction to a study of the Annals of the Foundling Hospital, on which I subsequently embarked in co-operation with Mr. Reginald H. Nichols, Secretary to that great Charity. For the latter task the material is so abundant that we shall be able to give but little space to the founder's life. This may perhaps be allowed to justify the separate work now published, only a small portion of which is directly concerned with the Foundling.

I wish to thank the Governors of the Foundling Hospital for their kind permission to search in the archives, and to reproduce pictures. Mr. Nichols has given much valued help of various kinds; and I am also indebted to Rev. Dr. Whitney, Dr. A. P. Newton, Rev. Claude Jenkins, Rev. Dr. Hodges, Rev. M. Taylor, Rev. W. N. Willson, Mr. J. Paul de Castro, Mr. H. S. Liesching, Dr. H. S. Bennett, and Rev. Canon Myers.

If this little work finds its way to America I hope that some admirer of Coram there may add to our knowledge of the man and his work by making use of material probably available at Boston.

H. F. B. COMPSTON.

March, 1918.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	DEDICATION	3
	PREFACE	5
I.	INTRODUCTION	9
II.	A CORAM BIBLIOGRAPHY	14
III.	LYME REGIS: CORAM THE SAILOR-BOY	20
IV.	MASSACHUSETTS: CORAM THE CHURCHMAN	26
V.	AFLOAT AND ASHORE: CORAM THE EMPIRE-BUILDER ...	44
VI.	THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL: CORAM THE PHILANTHROPIST	81
VII.	"THOUGH MEN BE SO STRONG THAT THEY COME TO FOUR SCORE YEARS, YET——"	111

ILLUSTRATIONS

		TO FACE PAGE
1.	PORTRAIT OF CAPTAIN CORAM, AFTER HOGARTH ...	*Title*
2.	LYME REGIS, FROM A PRINT PUBLISHED IN 1723 ...	22
3.	THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, FROM A PRINT PUBLISHED IN 1753	82
4.	THE CORAM STATUE, FOUNDLING HOSPITAL	110

THOMAS CORAM

I

INTRODUCTION

CHARITY as a force really active in human affairs dates from Calvary. It acquired cohesion and gained momentum when the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as the state religion. The history of its movement is chequered. Unwise methods often tend to increase the evils they are intended to remove. The monasteries, which for many centuries were executive agents of Christian charity, in some ways did harm. But they probably did more good than harm; and when in England they were suppressed it soon became clear that something must be done to replace the charitable ministries so rudely interrupted. Thus came, *inter alia*, the Elizabethan Poor Laws. It might be supposed that Poor Laws are the fruit of

state obligations and not charity. But in the sixteenth century this view was apparently not taken. And quite consistently the policy that produced the Poor Law went on to express itself in the Statute of Charitable Uses (1601). This was intended to safeguard all forms of private philanthropy as ancillary to that of the state.

"For relief of aged, impotent and poor people, some for maintenance of sick and maimed soldiers and mariners, schools of learning, free schools, and scholars in Universities, some for repair of bridges, ports, havens, causeways, churches, sea-banks and highways, some for education and preferment of orphans, some for or towards relief, stock or maintenance for houses of correction, some for marriages of poor maids, some for supportation, aid and help of young tradesmen, handicraftsmen and persons decayed, and others for relief or redemption of prisoners or captives, and for aid or ease of any poor inhabitants concerning payment of fifteens, setting out of soldiers, and other taxes."

It may be noted, in passing, that this somewhat quaint assortment of "Charitable Uses" suggests not remotely certain links between Philanthropy and Empire-building.

The civil war of the seventeenth century checked this manifold beneficence. People had less money to give away. The Puritan ascendancy was short-lived and it would be unfair to charge it with neglect. And since charity never faileth it soon reappears. But it reappears with a difference. Men were finding out the benefits of co-operation in trade; and "Joint Stock" Charity began its beneficent course.

"Benevolent persons were discovering with wonder what were the glorious effects it had pleased God's infinite goodness to produce by subscriptions merely during the will of the contributor, and many of them not exceeding one guinea a year." [1]

Join the two forces of readiness to contribute guineas and earnest personal work for good causes, and you have the main features of the charitable and philanthropic activity for which the eighteenth century is honourably conspicuous. The movement had set in towards the close of the previous

[1] B. Kirkman Gray, *A History of English Philanthropy*, 1905, p. 80, quoting from *An Account of . . . St. George's Hospital*, 1737.

century. It was strong under Anne, less so under the first two Georges,[1] and very powerful and extensive in the second half of the century.

On looking closer at the movement there seem to be three characteristics worth noting for our present study.

(1) It was promoted by laymen, who saw what needed doing and did it with or without help from the Church.

(2) These laymen were, however, persons with religious outlook and principles. They provided their Charities, for example, with chapels and preachers.

(3) They represent some of the varied activities to which we owe the upbuilding of our empire. Trade and commerce, law, printing and journalism, the service of the state, the army,—all are there. The mercantile marine is represented by Thomas

[1] Mr. Gray (*op. cit.* pp. 262, 263) justly criticizes Mr. Lecky's rather scant regard for this period's philanthropic output. Coram secured the Foundling Charter in 1739. The Magdalen Hospital, the Female Orphan Asylum, the Marine Society, were all at work before George III. began his reign. Lecky post-dates the Magdalen by eleven years.

Coram, who did more for the direct promotion of colonial enterprise than any eighteenth-century philanthropist with the possible exception of Oglethorpe.

This latter side of Coram's activity has been overshadowed by his great work in projecting the Foundling Hospital; but undoubtedly he lent a hand to work that contributed directly to the upbuilding of empire. That this was recognized in his lifetime is clear, as will appear in these pages. A single instance may be given in this Introduction. In the *London Advertiser and Literary Gazette* for Monday, April 1, 1751, an obituary notice of Coram remarks that "among the many public Acts of Utility by which his Memory will live, it may suffice to mention one of the latest." Then follows a reference to the Foundling. "One of the latest" is now the only one of Coram's "acts of utility" commonly remembered. It seems worth while to attempt to gain a clear idea of his career and work as a whole.

II

A CORAM BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE life of Captain Thomas Coram seems never to have been recorded in detail, and the available materials are probably insufficient for the full story. It will be convenient at the outset to notice the principal existing sources of information, especially since the meagre article on Coram in the *Dictionary of National Biography* offers little guidance as to printed works and none as to manuscripts.

There are several MSS. at the Foundling, a few at the British Museum, the Bodleian, and Lambeth Palace; and some at Boston, Massachusetts.

Important among printed works is J. Brownlow, *Memoranda or Chronicles of the Foundling Hospital including Memoirs of Captain Coram*, 1847. Brownlow, who was secretary of the Foundling and a careful and

enthusiastic student of its history, though untrained in scientific method, reissued this as a new work, differently arranged and with several regrettable omissions, in 1858, with the title, *History and Objects of the Foundling Hospital with a Memoir of the Founder.* This is now in its fourth edition as revised by Brownlow's successor in the secretaryship of the Foundling, Mr. W. S. Wintle, 1881. Though showing certain obvious defects in arrangement and treatment, Brownlow's compilation is the most convenient work hitherto accessible, and the present writer is much indebted to it. The special usefulness of the work lies in its extensive quotations from a memoir written by Dr. Brocklesby. Richard Brocklesby, M.D. ("the 'Rock less B' of the wits" [1]), figures in the pages of Boswell, for he was a personal friend of Johnson and a distinguished medical man. He published his Harveian Oration and other works. But the list of his writings in the British Museum contained, up to a recent date, no sign of Coram, and Brownlow gives no reference to

[1] Austin Dobson, *An Eighteenth Century Hippocrates* (W. Heberden), in the *National Review*, Dec., 1917.

its title and date. There is, however, an anonymous pamphlet published in the year of Coram's death (1751), *Private Virtue and publick Spirit displayed in a succinct Essay on the Character of Captain Thomas Coram*, in which I found every passage attributed to Brocklesby by Brownlow. And since the latter writer, who was connected with the Foundling all his life, shows an accurate knowledge of his subject and quotes unhesitatingly as from Brocklesby, there is every reason to believe that Brocklesby wrote the pamphlet. The British Museum authorities have recently agreed to regard this as a provisional identification. The pamphlet so largely reproduced by Brownlow is of the highest importance as an estimate of Coram's career by a personal friend and a writer of some distinction.

Next to this, but at a distance, I should be inclined to place a very different work, *The Scandalizade, a Panegyri-Satiri-Serio-Comi-Dramatic Poem*, by Porcupinus Pelagius (1750), author of the *Causidicade*. This vigorous, and often coarse, effusion was written while Coram was still living, and

it contains some instructive references to him.

Of other early accounts may be noted those in the *London Magazine*, 1739, 1749, 1751, and the *Gentleman's Magazine* (which takes care to speak of Coram as "Captain by courtesy"), 1751. Short obituary notices are given in various morning and evening newspapers for March 30 or April 1, 1751 (e.g. *London Evening Post*, *Penny London Post*, *London Advertiser*, *Whitehall Evening Post*).

There are references to Coram in Hutchins's great *History of Dorset*, first published in 1774, and in Nichols and Stevens, *Works of William Hogarth*, vol. i. 1808. A good account is given by Geo. Roberts in his *History and Antiquities of the Borough of Lyme Regis and Charmouth*, 1834, pp. 279–284, a work that deserves reissue. Books on London topography, such as Besant's and Walford's, have notes on Coram in connexion with the Foundling. Many will have read Mr. Austin Dobson's delightful little paper on *Captain Coram's Charity* in *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, vol. i. 1892. Mr. Dobson

there describes a book in his possession that once belonged to Coram—Samuel Pepys's *Memoirs relating to the State of the Royal Navy*, 1688. This volume, on a subject of interest to Coram, was presented to him by one C. Jackson, March 14, 1724, and Coram gave it to a Mr. Mills, June 10, 1746. There is another reference to this interesting relic in Mr. Dobson's *De Libris*, 1908.

There are some important American publications to note—F. W. P. Greenwood, *History of King's Chapel in Boston*, 1833; N. T. Bent (misprinted "Brent" in the *D. N. B.*), *Discourse historical of St. Thomas' Church, Taunton, Mass.*, 1844; the valuable *Historical Collections of the American Colonial Church* (vol. iii. Massachusetts), 1873 (containing documents not printed elsewhere); and a very readable paper read before the American Antiquarian Society, Boston, in 1892, by Hamilton Andrews Hill, *Thomas Coram in Boston and Taunton.*

For readers interested specially in Coram as philanthropist, B. Kirkman Gray (misprinted B. K. "Conway" in *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. vi. p. 855), *History of*

English Philanthropy, 1905, is of the greatest service. It is a masterly survey of the whole subject. Mr. C. S. Loch's article, *Charity*, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, xi. ed., is very clear and full. More limited in range is the scholarly research thesis of Mr. Garnet Portus (a Rhodes Scholar from Australia), *Caritas Anglicana*, 1912, dealing with the period 1678–1740.

Other authorities will be referred to as required in the course of the work.

III

LYME REGIS: CORAM THE SAILOR-BOY

THOMAS CORAM was a Dorset man, though he appears to have belonged to the Cor*h*ams, an old Devonshire family long connected with Ottery St. Mary and, later on, with Kinterbury.[1] When Coram became

[1] At the Foundling Hospital (Library, vol. 45) is a MS. copy of the Achievement and Pedigree of the Corhams as entered in Book C. 1. fo. 262 in the Herald's College. The armorial bearings are "Two Coats quarterly. First Argent a Cross between 4 Eagles displayed Sable. Secondly, Sable a fess between 3 antelopes passant Or, the third as the second, the fourth as the first. Crest on a wreath an Otter Or."

For Kinterbury see Tristram Risdon, *Survey of Devon*, an early seventeenth-century work. Risdon died 1640. The allusion occurs in the Additions of the 1811 edition: "Kinterbury was for several generations the property and residence of the family of Corham. It has recently been sold by Francis Corham, Esq. to Mr. Andrews, a farmer."

The Pedigree notes that Thomas Corham, born Jan. 4, 1720, was presented with a silver cup by his godfather, Captain Thomas Coram.

a public character in London there must have been many a witticism on Coram and *coram* ("in the presence of"), for eighteenth-century punsters knew their Latin better than those of to-day.

His father is believed to have been a master mariner of Lyme Regis, and here Thomas Coram was born about the year 1668. Of his baptism no record has been found. A younger brother, William, was baptized at Lyme in 1671.

Of Thomas's boyhood nothing is known save the approximate date of his first voyage. We may picture him as a sturdy lad, rosy-cheeked, with honest, open countenance, speaking the broad "Darset," now, unhappily, becoming rare; often down amidst the shipping at the famous old harbour the "Cobb," perhaps "creeping like snail unwillingly to school," and attending with his mother, and his father when home from a voyage, the Sunday services at the old parish church, dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. The Vicar of Lyme Regis at that time was the Rev. Timothy Hallett, who, it would appear, had been appointed to the

living about five years before Coram's birth, and held it for no less than sixty-six years. It may well be that at Lyme Regis Coram in early childhood conceived that affection for the Church of England which he retained all his life.

He may have been able faintly to recall the exciting battle at sea off Lyme Regis in 1672, when the British defeated the Dutch fleet; and he would be sure to hear from his elders stories of the long siege of the town in 1644, when Prince Maurice tried in vain to capture it for the Royalists. Of smuggling and smugglers he would hear much; Lyme Regis and Beer, a few miles to the west, were notorious for their contraband trade. And from old sailor-men down at the Cobb, or from his father, he would hear stories of Lyme's more prosperous days of long ago, when the port had a big trade with the West Indies, and with France and Spain. Lyme ships and seamen helped to defeat the Spanish Armada. He might learn that the town is mentioned in Domesday Book, and that its Charter dates from Edward I. It would be interesting to know

whether young Coram was home from a voyage when the Duke of Monmouth landed at Lyme to begin his ill-fated rebellion in 1685. Did he watch the *Helderenbergh* and her two companion vessels when they dropped anchor outside the Cobb to the westward, and did he follow the royal rebel to his quarters at the George Inn ?

But Lyme Regis, one of the loveliest and oldest of English seaports, soon fades from the picture of Coram's life ; and there is little or nothing in the town to remind the tourist of its worthy son except his portrait on postcards, for which there is but small demand. I would venture to suggest to Dorset men in London, where Coram worked and died, that it would be a graceful and patriotic act to erect in Lyme Regis some sort of memorial to so noble a representative of their great county.[1]

Coram first went to sea in 1679 or 1680.

[1] About the year 1846 Dr. F. P. Hodges, Vicar of Lyme Regis, had the Corham coat of arms painted on some panelling in the chancel. His successor removed this panelling when the church was restored ; it appears to have been sold. and nothing is known of its whereabouts.

This we know from his own statement in the letter given on p. 65: "I went to sea at 11½ years old, several years before King Charles ye 2d dyed." He is excusing his lack of education; he could "never speak good English," and could not be expected to "write good Gramer."

He was very young to begin the hard life of a sailor. Perhaps he first shipped with his father or some other Lyme skipper, and in that case he would fare better than the average sailor-boy of those days, and better than if he had joined the Navy. The conditions of life aboard of a man-of-war early in the eighteenth century were deplorable. We can picture them vividly from *Roderick Random*. The bad rations came up for discussion in Parliament in 1703. Not for a century later were water-tanks in general use. The water was in casks, and within a few days of leaving port it became unwholesome to drink. The salt junk created a thirst relieved by poor beer, and the navy "hard-tack" biscuits were stubborn fare. One hopes that young Coram started out with a supply of wholesome food, with perhaps

some good Darzet Zider. The Merchant Service seems to have attracted the best seamen of those days. The pay was often higher than that in the Navy. Otherwise there was little difference between the two. The training was much the same, all the ships were sailing-vessels, and a man-of-war was just a bigger merchant ship with better guns—for the tramp wind-jammer went armed then as her speedier daughter does to-day again.[1]

[1] For very interesting treatment of these subjects see C. N. Robinson, *The British Fleet*, 1894.

IV

MASSACHUSETTS: CORAM THE CHURCHMAN

When Coram first had a ship of his own we do not know. As quite a young man he is said to have been master of a vessel trading between England and Virginia with cargoes of pitch and tar;[1] and this fact, as we shall see, first brought him into prominence as a promoter of colonial enterprise. What is clear is that in 1693, when only twenty-five years of age, Coram crossed the Atlantic for a sojourn in America of ten[2] years. He took out to Boston a cargo of merchandise. But his ship's company included a number of

[1] Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, ii. p. 76.

[2] See Coram's *Memorial . . . to the Archbishop of Canterbury* [*cir.* 1747], cited on p. 36 f. "North America where he resided Ten successive years in the Several Reignes of their late Majesties King William and Queen Anne" . . . "First coming into those parts 54 years past." Cf. his letter to Secretary of S.P.G. [1740], cited on p. 31: ten years in New England.

skilled artizans, and with their assistance he started business in Boston as a shipwright, financed probably by London merchants.[1] He was welcomed by the new Governor of Massachusetts, Sir William Phipps, who like Coram had been bred to the sea, and whose character seems to have been somewhat like his.[2]

After four or five years at Boston Coram removed to Taunton, an early settlement (1638) of the Plymouth colony and a chief centre of trade for Bristol county. It was named after Taunton, Somerset, the home of most of the original settlers there. Coram appears to have resided alternately at Taunton and Boston. In the latter city he met Eunice Wait, daughter of John and Eunice Wait, and married her on June 27, 1700.

Of his shipbuilding an interesting detail is recorded. Usually of course a ship is launched as soon as the hull is complete,

[1] *Memorial to Archbishop:* "To promote, carry on, and conduct shipbuilding . . . on account of some considerable merchants of London."

[2] Phipps died in England in 1695, aged 44, while awaiting trial for alleged misgovernment, after a career of singular interest.

and she is fitted out when afloat. But Coram speaks of a vessel which he built "finished on the stocks and rigg'd," with "all her sails and cables on bord her and her anchours at the Bows." [1] Mr. Hill aptly recalls *The Building of the Ship*, where the vessel is launched fully rigged. Longfellow thought it necessary to defend this in his Notes to the poem, pointing out that it is "neither a blunder nor a poetic license," and Coram's practice would support the assertion. Years afterwards, in London, Coram did much the same for the Foundling Hospital. The new Charity, unlike some others of the period, had not to wait for its Charter of Incorporation; it was rigged and fitted out forthwith.

At Taunton Coram met with serious annoyance, and his very life was more than once in danger. He was implicated in several disputes and suffered injustice in the local courts: the decisions of the latter were reversed or revised by the higher courts to

[1] H. A. Hill, *Thomas Coram in Boston and Taunton*, p. 8. Similarly in Coram's letter to S.P.G., 1740 (see below, p. 31): "one of them [*i.e.* two new ships] with the Sails to the Yards ready for the Sea."

which he appealed, however, and when finally he "sailed out of Boston Harbour . . . he had been vindicated in his character, and confirmed in the possession of all his rights."[1] But in Taunton there was a strong prejudice against him. This may have been due partly to envy at a new-comer's ability and success, partly to a certain asperity and forthrightness in his character, and not least to *odium theologicum*. Coram was a staunch Churchman in an almost entirely Nonconformist environment. Taunton was the last place for such a man to settle in. Boston too was strongly Congregationalist, or "Independent," to use the old term; and when a very old man in England Coram still remembered the Independents as "ye most malignantly inveterate" of the "discentors" from the Church of England.[2] But Boston was a big place, and had its King's Chapel. There was elbow-room. Taunton was a much smaller town with absolutely no provision for Church folk. The early settlers there would have nothing to do with Church customs.

[1] H. A. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
[2] *Memorial to the Archbishop*, 1747.

Easter and Christmas were superstitious observances; and an organ was a "squeaking invention of the Devil." [1]

Yet it was at Taunton that Coram found his first opportunity for public benevolence. The story is an uncommon one. In one of his numerous lawsuits Coram suffered the injustice of having his shipyard seized, by a Deputy Sheriff named Burt, as a penalty for some default of payment. The new fully-rigged vessel was part of the property distrained upon, and Coram's work must have been seriously interrupted. He appealed successfully to a higher court, and was authorized to indemnify himself on Burt's estate of fifty-nine acres situate at a place called Berkley, near Taunton, and now absorbed in the township. On his way to levy the execution in company with the High Sheriff, while riding "pretty swift through a thicket," Coram was shot at and narrowly escaped death. The would-be assassin was Burt, who had hidden in the

[1] P. C. Lincoln, *From Seed to Harvest* (A Play portraying the history of St. Thomas Church, Taunton, Mass.), 1916.

bushes. Coram himself has described this adventure in a letter to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, dated September 18, 1740, printed in the *Historical Collections of the American Colonial Church*, vol. iii. p. 342. Burt renewed his murderous attempt—

"In a week or two afterwards he met me in a by Place, seized and got me down on the ground with intent to murder me and would have done it had it not been for a Man coming by accidentally."

Coram duly took possession of his fifty-nine acres "with Turf and Twigg as the Maneries [*sic*] there." But he would not use the estate for his own personal benefit. A marked *trait* in his character was a complete indifference to personal gain. He could have become rich. As we shall see, he died penniless. And this windfall he decided to dispose of in a way that illustrates his pride, his benevolence, his love for the Church, his magnanimity to Taunton—and his personal distaste for its then inhabitants. By a deed dated December 8, 1703, he left the estate in trust to the vestry of King's Chapel, Boston. The provisions of this deed were—

"That if ever hereafter the inhabitants of the town of Taunton should be more civilized than they now are, and if they should incline to have a Church of England built amongst them, or in their town, then upon application of the inhabitants of said town, that is to say, forty ratable men of them, upon their application, or petition to the said vestry, or their successors, for any suitable part of said land, to build a Church of England, or a school house for the use and service of said Church,"

the vestry were authorized to convey a whole or part "as they should see good for their purpose."[1] The deed states that this gift was made

"in consideration of the love and respect which the donor hath and doth bear unto the said Church [of England] as also for other good causes and considerations him especially at this present moving."

The recent attempts on his life sufficiently explain the last paragraph.

The land was, however, never used for the object Coram had in view. Years passed

[1] Extracts from the deed of gift, kindly sent by the Rev. Malcolm Taylor, Rector of St. Thomas, Taunton, Mass.

into decades, and nothing was done. Taunton Churchmen built their church in 1740, but were unable to avail themselves of Coram's generosity ; and in the letter to the S.P.G. in 1740, quoted above, Coram asks the Society to make inquiries through their American agents into the neglect of his gift, due, he asserts, to "wilful prejudice and mismanagement." He thinks the S.P.G. can put the matter right—

"I am persuaded that the present inhabitants of Taunton will not adventure to play their tricks with the Corporation [*i.e.* S.P.G.] as the last generation of vipers there did with me."

Coram seems to have had no just cause for dissatisfaction with Taunton Churchmen, for King's Chapel, Boston, was alone answerable for the administration of the trust. In reply to inquiries made by the S.P.G., Mr. Roger Price, of Taunton, wrote in 1742 to say that Coram's gift had been unused owing to some flaw in the legal instrument.[1]

[1] *Historical Collections*, vol. iii. p. 362. Equally improbable, one would hope, is Coram's suggestion (in his letter to the S.P.G.) that the neglect was due to the "Senior Minister Mr. Miles" being offended because Coram had given the deed to Mr. Bridge, a missionary, whom he liked better.

This was obviously not the case; the deed is perfectly clear. But Coram's stipulation, "forty ratable men," could not be met. The subscription list for the fund raised at Taunton for purchasing glebe land contains only twenty-six names.[1] One might have supposed that communication with Coram, a legal revision of the deed with his approval, or a determined effort to find fourteen ratable men to support the undertaking, might have been attempted. But the fifty-nine acres at Berkley were lost to the Church; and not long after the donor's death the property was sold by the trustees and the proceeds were devoted to the rebuilding of King's Chapel, Boston, where Coram had often worshipped.

In view of Coram's quite natural irritation at the neglect of his gift it is somewhat amusing to find that the promoters of the building fund actually solicited him for a donation! This *naïveté* did not appeal to the old Captain. "If the twelve Apostles were to apply to me," he said, "I would persist

[1] N. T. Bent, *Discourse historical*, etc., p. 9. In face of this fact it seems strange that Mr. Bent suggests the unsuitability of the site as a possible reason for the neglect of Coram's gift.

in refusing." The gentleman who received this vigorous reply writes, "I thought this a definitive answer, and so took my leave." [1]

But the old sea-dog's bark was worse than his bite. When the church at Taunton was an accomplished fact, and appropriately dedicated to St. Thomas, Coram sent over a large gift of books to form a parish Library. Some of these are still in existence, carefully cherished. Many have been lost long ago. They included some costly volumes, and some were in "dead or foreign languages." Among them were *Select Discourses of the Doctrine of the Two Covenants*, *Lectures on the Catechism*, and *Friendly Admonition to the Drinkers of Brandy*. The first Librarian, Mr. James Briggs, issued books in exchange for pledges to ensure their safe return. Among the pledges mentioned in the early records were "the hed of a riden hood," "one pare of silver balens," "one hankicher," "one sheet Coten and Linen and one Pillow," and "15*s*. Lawful Money."

In addition to the books for this Lending

[1] H. A. Hill, *Thomas Coram in Boston and Taunton*, p. 16.

Library Coram sent a Prayer-book given by Mr. Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, for the clergyman's use in church; it is still one of the treasures of this historic parish.[1]

Coram's love for the Church of England never failed, and since the sequel to his Taunton gift has taken us beyond the period of his sojourn in America it will be convenient to notice in this chapter other and later instances of his devotion.

At Lambeth is preserved an interesting "Memorial and Petition" from Coram to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is printed in the *Historical Collections of the American Colonial Church*, iii. p. 64. The document is undated, a fact noted on the MS. by Archbishop Secker in his own handwriting. But it must have been written in 1747 or very early in 1748.[2] There is nothing to show

[1] N. T. Bent, *Discourse historical*, etc., Note H. J. Brownlow, *Memoranda*, p. 98. Cf. C. Brockwell's letter to S.P.G. (1744), *Historical Collections*, etc., iii. p. 385.

[2] He alludes to his "first coming into those parts [*sc.* Massachusetts] 54 years past." The later Petition to the King was in 1748. It should be noted that all

whether Dr. Potter or Dr. Herring was the Archbishop memorialized. Dr. Potter died October 10, 1747.

The petitioner urges the importance of establishing a Church of England College at Cambridge, Massachusetts. He reminds the Archbishop of the existence of the very efficient colleges provided in New England by the Dissenters. There was Harvard, founded as far back as 1650, and Stoughton "about 50 years past" (the building was erected by 1699); and other Colleges were in being or were planned. Coram bears valuable, because evidently not very gracious, testimony to the excellent education there obtainable. He would like to see a King's College, Cambridge, in America.

The petition gives sad and striking evidence of the appalling failure of the Church in earlier times to make provision for the religious needs of the colonies. When Coram went out to Boston in 1693 there was only one Church of England clergyman "in all y^e^

through Coram's life the legal year began on March 25. The "New Style" Act of 1750 did not come into operation until after his death.

inhabited part of y^e^ English Empire [*sic*] in America." And this solitary representative of the home-land was clearly a disgrace to his profession. Coram speaks of him as "a very worthless man." He would spend his Saturday nights drinking and playing cards with an Irish butcher and an Irish barber, and was often very unfit for service next morning. People who wanted to recognize Sunday by going to church were often disappointed "and greatly discouraged." This was at Boston, where the Nonconformists were so conspicuous for the efficiency of their organization and for the character and ability of their religious ministry. The lapse of half a century of years had not effaced from Coram's mind the dismal impression. It must be remembered that the S.P.G. had not come upon the scene at the time to which he refers, and matters were apparently in a worse state even than in 1675, when Bishop Compton's inquiries elicited the information that there were *four* clergy in the American colonies. The pioneer work of men like Wolfall and Heriot in the sixteenth century had not been followed up, and the

Charter of the S.P.G. (1701) shows how lamentable was the position of the Church of England in the great Transatlantic colonies.[1]

But Coram's outlook included more than a recognition of the claims of true religion and sound learning among British colonists. He has never been claimed, I think, as an advocate of Christian missions to the heathen. Yet in this petition to the Archbishop, as in the petition to the King not long afterwards presented, Coram urges the desirability of evangelizing the children of North American Indians. He represents rather closely the aims and motives of the S.P.G., which from the outset was a missionary organization, seeking to provide not only for the needs of colonists, but for their heathen neighbours.

What reception his suggestions met with at Lambeth does not appear. But Coram meant business, and we soon find him hard

[1] *Classified Digest of S.P.G. Records*, chap. i. The first eleven chapters of this interesting and valuable work are well worth studying in connexion with the life of Coram *quâ* Churchman.

at work in fulfilment of his purpose to promote a petition to the King; he tells the Archbishop that he will gladly do this in spite of his "old age and decayed strength." And the springtime of the year 1748 found the old mariner, now in his eightieth year, going about London inviting people to sign the petition. A letter preserved at the Foundling Hospital well illustrates his zeal, and his alert attention to details. The Mr. Austin to whom he writes was a schoolmaster in St. Bartholomew's Close—

"Sir,

"I request That when you send the two Draughts of Petitions Tomorrow Morning, you will also be pleasd to send The 2 Rough Draughts within the brown paper and that you will also be pleasd to send me a little of your best Ink in a little vial that I may take it with me for every Subscriber to write his Name with it that it may look all alike [and as tho subscribed at y^{e} same time] and not as tho one name was writen last summer and another Bartholomew tide and some in one County and some in another; I pray you will rule the Lines with y^{e} Black Lead pencils that they may be easily rub^{d} out with bread, if needfull.

"I beg my best Compliments to Good Mrs. Austin.

"I am with Great Respect,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient friend and st.,

"THOMAS CORAM.

"London Wall,

"29 April, 1748."

I have looked in vain for Coram's last petition. But its purpose is clear, and this benevolent effort seems to have met with support. Brocklesby, writing in 1751, says—

"His last design, now left an orphan to the public care, which it well deserves, was a scheme for uniting the Indians in North America more closely to the British interest, by an establishment for the education of Indian girls.

. . . . . .

"May this charitable and pious purpose, in which he lived long enough to make some progress, be completed in virtue of his proposal; and let the benighted Indians in America join with the deserted Foundlings in Britain in blessing the memory of this worthy man." [1]

Thus far Coram the Churchman. Between the earliest and the latest tokens of his

[1] Quoted by Brownlow, *History . . . of the Foundling Hospital*, pp. 33, 34.

regard for religion there fall events, to be chronicled in the two following chapters, which will show him hard at work for colonial expansion and for philanthropy—each an appropriate field for a Churchman's activities. But before pursuing the thread of his life-story I would invite the reader to let the imagination dwell for a moment on the picture of the octogenarian mariner with ink-bottle instead of flower in his button-hole, carrying Mr. Austin's fair copy of the petition and handing a trimly-cut quill to the person whose signature he solicited. He had nothing whatever to gain personally from his task, and he had reached an age when such work must have taxed his energies. He was poor. He had met with trouble. In particular, the great hospital which owed its existence to him had, as we shall see, acquiesced in his exclusion from its governing body. But he must ever be doing—and doing good. If he could do no more for English children he might get something done for little American Indians. Ever loving his country and her colonies, and ever sensible of the claims of religion, he would

once more attempt something that might tend to the advantage of both.

"Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done." [1]

[1] Tennyson, *Ulysses*.

V

AFLOAT AND ASHORE: CORAM THE EMPIRE-BUILDER

Towards the close of the year 1703 Coram appears to have returned to England. And he soon found an opportunity of helping in the extension of colonial trade. It will be remembered that he had in years gone by taken to American ports cargoes of tar. Whence was that tar obtained? Not from England, but Sweden. It was the tar still known as "Stockholm tar," from the great fir and pine forests of Scandinavia. And it was brought to England in Swedish ships. The Tar Company of Sweden had virtually the monopoly of the trade; and the rates charged for shipping were "exorbitant and arbitrary," "to the great prejudice and discouragement of the trade and navigation of this kingdom." [1] Suggestions had for a long

[1] *Statutes at Large*, 1704. Anne, c. 10. Preamble to Act.

time back been made for promoting trade in tar, etc., with the colonies,[1] for Carolina and Georgia are rich in pine trees ; and Coram seems to have reinforced these suggestions in his usual energetic way.[2] The result was the " Act for encouraging the importation of naval stores from her Majesty's plantations in America," 1704. The encouragement took the form of a reward or premium for importing from America: tar at a bonus of £4 per tun of 8 barrels, resin or turpentine at £3 for 8 barrels. Penalties were fixed for destruction of pitch, pine trees, etc. This important Act resulted in employment for " thousands of families employed in that branch of trade in North America," and " above a million sterling was saved to the nation." [3]

For the next sixteen years or so Coram sailed the seas, taking cargoes to and from America,

[1] W. Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce in Modern Times*, p. 485.

[2] J. Brownlow, *History . . . of the Foundling Hospital*, p. 9. " In 1704 he was very instrumental in planning and procuring " the Act. He probably worked for this end before returning to England.

[3] J. Brownlow, *History*, etc., p. 9.

often and perhaps chiefly for the purposes of the Royal Navy;[1] and he made many voyages to the newly discovered fisheries of Newfoundland. He must have acquired, in the course of his journeys, large and particular knowledge of the needs and possibilities of colonial enterprise. He knew what districts would be suited for emigrants from England, and what openings there were for trade.

In 1715 we find him presenting a petition to Trinity House, of which he was now a younger Brother, proposing a new Settlement in some uninhabited part of North America. And, doubtless with a view to strengthening his position as an advocate for facilitating emigration, he prays for "a Certificate from the Corporation of his being well affected to his Majesty and the government, and of his skill in naval affairs." The Board Meeting at Trinity House (not in those days at Tower Hill, but at Deptford) promptly granted the desired Certificate, adding that "Mr. Coram was well known to several Elder Brothers."[2]

Coram must have met with adventures

[1] Affidavit, p. 47 f.

[2] Trinity House *Minutes*, March 6, 1715, p. 260*b*.

in the course of his seafaring life, but the only one on record appears to be that of the stranding and plundering of the *Seaflower* near Cuxhaven in 1719. The story is unfolded at great length in four separate Affidavits preserved at the Foundling Hospital. Here we may read the sworn testimony of the mate and carpenter, the boatswain and two seamen, the master, and Captain Coram, who shipped as "super-cargo." Coram's evidence seems worth reproducing in full, in spite of its prolixity, for the document has never been printed and is in its way full of interest. It need hardly be pointed out that Hanover was at this time in the dominions of George I. as Elector. Hamburg was still one of the Hanse ports.

The story could doubtless be paralleled by what has been recorded of Cornish wreckers in days not very far distant from our own.

"THOMAS CORAM OF LONDON MARINER AND SHIPWRIGHT

"*Fifty years of age or thereabout Testifieth*

"That he having usually sold to his Majestie in the Yeare past and at other times Quantities

of Naval Stores from America for the supply of his Majesties Navy did about February last past Designe to visit His Majesties Germain Dominions to see what Supplys of Timber or other Naval Stores could be had from thence fitt for the Navy Royal.

"That Thomas Pearse of London Esqre; who had Inclination to doe something for the raiseing a Trade at His Majesties City of Harburg, knowing the designe of the said Coram that he would goe for The River Elve, did desire him to take with him 6 Ship Load of Wheat for Hamburg and sell it there, and part of the Money it shou'd produce at Hamburg, he should lay out at his Majesties said Citty of Harburg to Load the ship there, and send her from thence back for London or elsewhere, to which the said Coram consented.

"Accordingly the said Thomas Pearse on his own proper Account put fourhundred and fifteen Quarters of fine Wheat on board one of his Ships called the Sea Flower then at London (Henry Pearson Master) which sailed from thence for Hamburg on the 4th of March Old Stile and from Gravesend the day following The said Coram being then on board and the said Ship very tight and every way well provided.

"That on the 14th day of the same Month in the Morning The said Ship came to the River Elve and received on board a Hamburger Pilote named John Strosolt who took Charge of her (from a Holygland man who came on board as a Pilote

of Holygland the day before) and in the forenoon Anchor'd her in the said River Elve, and in the afternoon he Weigh'd Anchor and sail'd up the said River for Hamburg until the Evening and then Anchor'd againe with the best Anchor and Cable. But in the night following the Wind came to the North North East and blowed so hard between three and four a clock the next morning that the said Cable parted and the Ship was a Drift, upon which the Second best Anchor was drop'd but it did not Ride the Ship which drove with the Wind and Tide on upon a Sand or Strand, and as soon as she struck on the same, the said Pilote gave an Ill Order that the Carpenter shou'd immediately cut the Cable which he did accordingly. It was then about high Water and the Wind blowing very hard with thick small snow and frezeing so hard that the Spry of the Sea which beat over the Ship, froze into thick Ice upon the Rigging and the Decks, and The Master & Seamen very wett and Cold, but the wind soon abated, & came More Eastwards and the Sea & the Weather much smoother, the Ship sett fast & Strong upon the easy sand, and it was found by the little Water she made which was all pumped out of her, that she was not Damag'd Otherwise than the Loss of her two best Anchors with part of the Cables to them, the first by the Cables parting and the second by being cut away by an Ill Order of the Hamburger Pilote as afores'd.

" Before the Water was Ebb'd from the said Ship it was day light by which the said Hamburger Pilote & others on board saw they were on the Strand or Shore of ye Distrect of Ritzebuttel & near to the Haven In that Distrect call'd Coxhaven where the said Pilote & the other Pilotes for the Citty of Hamburg lived for the better piloting Ships out of the Sea, up the said River Elve, that part of the Country being in the Juridiction of the s'd Citty of Hamburg w'ch hath a Baylif or Governor resideing there with some Solders, as also a Captain or Director of the sd. Pilots & Pilots boats.

" Then the said Coram (who had not been in the Elve before) enquired of the said John Strosolt the Pilot, what was fittest to be done In order to gett another Anchor & Cable and the Ship of the Strand, for the Lower Nip Tides were then comeing on.

" The said Pilot advised the said Coram to goe on shore with him to Coxhaven to the Captain of the Pilots who lived their and would Immediately send an Anchor & Cable and proper Assistance to gett the Ship off. Accordingly before Eight a Clock in the Morning the Water was so far Ebb'd away that the said Pilote & the said Coram went by the Ships Ladder down upon the Sand and walked towards Coxhaven, and by the Way meet many of the Boores or Country men of the Neighbuereing Villages, who were come on horseback from the Land upon the Strand towards the Ship

(which had her British Ensigne flying at the Main Topmast shrouds) with Axes & Sacks as if they Intended to Cutt up the Ship and carry away what was in her. But the said Pilote turn'd 'em all back, then by telling 'em ye Ship was Strong and tight and had no Water in her and that the Capt; & others were on board her. The said Coram hyer'd Two of the said Boores horses, as well to help him and the said Pilote over Some Deepe Slowes & Mirey places at the side of the Land going on and off the Strand, As to make the more Speed to the Captain of the pilots, Who the said Coram found to show a Readiness to doe his part for Sending proper assistance to Lighten the Ship and heave her off the sand, the said Coram gave Notice Immediately of it by a Messenger on horse-back with a Letter to the Master of the Ship on board, and To let him know he shou'd expect them & him with the Tide.

"The Captain of the Pilots sent for the pilots thereabout, but they were then gon to Church (it being Sunday Morning ye 15th day of March old Stile) and when they were return'd the said Captain of those Pilots Order'd some of them to goe with their Pilote Hoy (a Vessel between 20 or 30 Tons) which had a Cable and Anchor on board her, and Anchor near the Ship and lye by her until he should send other boats and Men with a greater Anchor & Cable, to Lighten the Ship & heave her off the Sand into Deepe water.

"Accordingly Nine men went (about Noon) off in a Small boat to the said Pilot's hoy then at Anchor in the Elve before Coxhaven six of which nine men were Pilots the other three were Servants as the said Captain of the Pilots told the said Coram who afterwards understood they did not goe to The Ship that Day.

"The said Captain also sent for Other Pilots or boatmen leiveing in that place or Neighbourhood with whom (by means of the said Captain who could speak some English) the said Coram agreed to pay them Forty Dollers for sixteen men and there Evers (large flatt bottomed boats which sails and Bear's the Sea well, and are eight or Ten Tons or more Each) To carry a Larger Anchor & Cable which the said Captain direct'd 'em To take to the said Ship, and to help pump the Water out if any shou'd be in her, and to heave her off the Sand into deepe Water. But in Case they should be oblig'd to take any part of the Cargoe (which was Wheat mostly in Sacks) into their Evers or large boats and put it on board the foresaid Pilot Hoy to ligteen the said Ship before They should be able to heave her off the Sand Or in Case they should find the said Ship so leakey that they should not be able to free her by pumping all the Water out of her, and should therefore be oblig'd Wholy to unload her before they should be able to Stop the leakes and get her off, then in either of those Cases, they should be paid over and Above the said

Forty Dollers, more money According to the Value of the works they shou'd doe over above their carrying the said Anchor & Cable with sixteen men & three evers or large boats to the said Ship and pumping the Water out if any should be in her, and for heaveing her off into Deepe water as aforesaid. And they promised to carry off the Said boats, Anchor and Cable to the Ship that afternoon, And the said Coram was to goe off with them.

"Soon after this agreement was made with those at Coxhaven Viz^{t} Martyn Meenes, Cloes Boat and others Notice was brought to them from the Village half a Leag off nearest To the said Ship, That the Master of her (who being wett & cold and impatient the said Pilot did not bring off the promised Assistance) was come on the Strand to ye Village and that no body was on board Her, the Seamen who were extremely wett and cold were all come on shore before to warme & Refresh themselves.

"Upon which Notice so brought to Coxhaven, the said Coram Observed an Immediate alteration, in those there who had agreed to Carry off the said Anchor & Cable with three Large boats to the Ship, To heave her off &c^{a}. And that they then pretend'd the Wind was to high to goe off with their boats etc; to the Ship that afternoon and yt it would be better To defer it until after midnight with other pretended difficulties and Delays whereas

in truth although ye' Weather continued Frezeing the Wind was then moderate & not to high to goe off with their boats and Carry an Anchor and Cable to the said Ship (as the said Coram who haveing had Long Experiance in the Sea affairs very well knew) and the wind was then as Low as at any time in that Day, And all the Ships in the Elve before Coxhaven where Rideing with their Topmast up, and the said Coram observ'd their smallest boats came and went frequently to & from the Shore.

" The sudding alteration, in the behaviour of those at Coxhaven, Together with reflecting on the frequent Barbarities report'd of those People when any English Ship happens to be drove upon their Shore caus'd a Jellousy in the said Coram that they had some Ill Designe against the Ship, not to assist her, according to their Agreement, but to make a Wreck of her & her Cargoe for their owne advantage, which Jellousy increas'd upon his Observeing the Holygland Men who came on board as a Holygland Pilote before mentioned, To be very busy amongst those at Coxhaven, as if they were agreed in the same Ill Confederation which caus'd the sd. Coram to hasten To the forementionʼd Village to fine out the Master of the s'd Ship, who was gon by another path to Coxhaven to hasten off his expected Assistance but finding those at Coxhaven wou'd not goe off to the said Ship, and understanding the said Coram was gone to y^{e} said Village he hasten'd theither to him, before

which time ye' flood Tide had overflow'd the Strand On which the ship was setting so that their was no turning to her unless any of those at Coxhaven woul'd have gon off to her with their boats, and it was Dark Night before the Tide was Ebb'd from the Strand. The said Coram and the said Master endeavour'd what possibly they co'ld to hyer horses to Carry y^e^ said Master and two of his men to the Ship and a Guide To Shew them the way Cleare of the Deepe Slowes and to bring back the Horses but none would goe or let their Horses goe they all knowing their was nobody on board the sd. Ship by which the said Coram & the said Master were the more Confirm'd in their beleife of a General Ill designe against the said Ship, and Cargoe.

" Then the said Master endeavour'd to borrow a Lanthorne & Candle to light him & his Mate to the Ship but could not get any although he verry much desired the Captain of the Pilots to help to get one for him, he Being then come to the said Village.

" About Nine a Clock at Night the said Master not having been able to procure a Lanthorne & Candle, went with his Mate in the dark to find out the Way cleare of the Slowes & dangerous places to the Ship, Whilest the said Coram went back to Coxhaven to endeavour againe with some of those there To Carry him off to the Ship, the wind continueing Moderate & easy, but they would not be

prevail'd upon to doe it which obliged the s[d] Coram to stay That Night at Coxhaven as the said Master and his Mate did at the Village above mention'd, they having not been able to find the way on to the Strand On which the Ship was setting.

" Next Morning as the said Coram was Riding to the said Village, in his way to the said Ship he saw her British Ensigne flying at her Main Topmast Shrouds as the day before in which she drove on there. He with much difficulty hyerd a Waggon to Carry all the Seamen to the Ship from the said Village where he left some of them Sick the night before with the fateigue & Cold they had in the Morning, As he came on the Strand Towards the said Ship which was setting dry upon the Sand at a good Distance from the Water, he perceived that her Ensigne was taken Away and when he came nearer he saw many boats & Waggons round about her and many more Waggons driveing hastely towards her and abundance of men on board her having broken down her Great Cabin Also cutt up her Decks in several places, some were hoisting out or Lowereing down the sacks of Wheate and other things from every quarter & part all round her into their Waggons & boats whilst others were cutting & takeing away the Rigging & sails, and abundance of Waggons goeing away loaded & comeing empty, the said Coram also saw two holes that had been cutt in her on the Starboard Side under the Wales and that the Capstand was

throwed overboard & the pump Geere Taken away (which are said to be their methods to prevent Ships from Being saved) and when the said Coram & the s^{d} Master & Seamen came on board to endeavour to put a Stop to their plundering, they on board laid hands on the s^{d} Coram and threw him down on the Deck and Grossly abus'd him & they treated the s^{d} Master bad or worse Than they did the s^{d} Coram who finding it impossible for him with the said Master & Seamen without having any Assistance from the Government of the place to prevent those people from their pursute of spoyling the s^{d} Ship & Robing her of everything on board, Retired from her to the said Village, and from thence went and Made Application To the Governor or Baylif at Ritzebuttel, who said he would give order That everything which had been taken from the Ship shou'd be brought to the Admiralties Storehouse at Coxhaven and those who tooke it should have but one third part of it, and the s^{d} Coram shou'd have two thirds as Owner of it, Accordingly some part of the Wheate which was Wett was brought to the said Storehouse and part of it sold publickly to Sundry buyers for two hundred Thirty three Dollers & Thirty nine Stivers and no more, Which was deliver'd to the s^{d} Coram who out of the s^{d} Money paid all the Charges which accrew'd, and holds himself Accomptable for what he has Receved.

"The said Coram observed a great deale of

Dry Wheate as well as many other Things which he saw carry'd in the Waggons from the Ship to the Neighbouring Villages, was not brought to the foresaid Storehouse, he also Observed that the Wheat which was brought from the s^{d} Ship by boats into Coxhaven . . . the greatest part of it was brought by Martyn Meenes Cloes Boat and others the very same men who had agreed for forty Dollers to Carry off an Anchor & Cable to the s^{d} Ship and help heave her off the Strand as aforesaid, and these were some of the men who Dismantl'd her off her Riggeing and Cutt & Carry'd away her Shrouds, Stays &c^{a} and brought Great part of it to Coxhaven where it Remain'd in their possession when the s^{d} Coram left that place, And one of those men thretend to kill the s^{d} Coram for goeing into one of their Evers or Large boats to looke for some things of the Ship which he supposed might have been Conceal'd there he haveing seen things Carry'd out of those boats away from the said Storehouse, and when they had taken all the Wheate out of the said Shipe & Strip'd her cleare of everything and had Cutt & Carry'd away all her Masts Yards & Bowspreet except the bare Main Mast which was only left without Shroud or rope to it, then they the said Martyn Meenes Cloes Boat and the others who had agreed for forty Dollers to Carry off an Anchor & Cable to the s^{d} Ship and help heave her off the Strand as aforesaid together with the Captain of the Pilots and the

forementioned John Strosolt the s^{d} Ships Pilot, Went and Stop'd those holes which had been cutt in her, by which they made her tight as before, and brought the Naked Hull on Thursday the 19th day of March old Stile Into Coxhaven where it Remain'd in their possession, and was tight and strong on y^{e} 25th day of the same month (when the said Coram left Coxhaven) and continueth so as the said John Strosolt lately at Hamburg told the said Coram, Who likewise Observ'd that on the evening of the day on w^{ch} The Ship was drove on the Strand when the said Coram was gon to the Village nearest the Ship as before mention'd, the said Captain of the Pilots came thither to him & shew'd him two Soldiers which he said my Lord the Governor had order'd there to prevent any body from Meddling with y^{e} Ship and told the said Coram he must give them Money to pay for their Victuals. Accordingly the s^{d} Coram (who had not heard before of any Governor or other person near y^{e} place superiour to y^{e} Captain of the Pilots) then gave those two Soldiers two English shillings to pay for their Suppers that night, and orderd 'em their Diners the next Day and afterwards paid by the Governor or Baylif's for four Days victuals had at the said Village by the said two Soldiers, Who the said Coram conceives did no good for the Ship, for the Next Morning he saw one of 'em without having his Armes, by the side of the Ship on the Strand standing there with

those who were plundering her, but did not see him assist nor oppose those plunderers.

"The said Coram also observed there was not the tenth part of the Cargoe of Wheate nor any part of the other goods & stores, w^{ch} he had seen Carry'd from the Ship to the Villages in Waggons, Brought to the Admiralty Storehouse afores^{d}, did therefore together with the said Master of the Ship make Complaint thereof to the said Governor or Baylif at Ritzebuttle and pray'd him to give an Order and protection to search for those Conceal'd Goods. Accordingly the said Governor Immediatly sent his provost & two Soldiers with y^{e} said Coram & the said Master of the Ship, his Mate & Carpenter, To Search all suspected houses & places for any of the said goods conceal'd, but the delays and behaviour of the said provoust after he was come from the said Governor was such as gave the s^{d} Coram & those of the Ship with him great Reason to beleive the provoust his designe was to give notice of it to those who had any of the Conceald Goods, and at the first house they came to search, the said Master of the Ship desir'd a Shop or Large Cupboard should be search'd and the woman was about to open it, when one of those Soldiers who was for a protection laid hold of the said Master and dragg'd him away & drew his sword upon him and with both hands to it offer'd to Cleave his head for his attempting to search there. The said Master escap'd from him

and with his Mate & Carpenter hasted with the said Coram and made Complaint of it to the Governor or Baylif at Ritzebuttel who spoake angrely to the said provost and soldiers but the said Coram did not understand Nither does he beleive they had any other punishment from the said Governor who would have had the said Coram & those of the Ship Returne with the same provost & Soldiers againe to Search, but they cold not think it proper or safe. The said Soldier was the same which stood with those on the Strand who plundred the Ship, and the provost (as the said Captain of th Pilots had told the said Coram & those with him in those Words) was the worst Rascold in all that Country, Nither could it have avail'd much to search for the Conceal'd Goods after such an allarm had been given of it.

"The said Coram is possitive that the s^{d} Ship with all her Stores, Tackle & apparel and all her Cargoe would have been saved if any of those at Coxhaven would have assisted, for being paid for it as they would have done, and Notwithstanding they would not assist the said Ship the said Coram & those belonging to her could have sav'd her & her Cargoe without any help or assistance from those at Coxhaven, If the Governor or Baylif had protected them in it and prevented the people from spoyling her and Carrying away her Cargoe as might easily have been done.

"After the said Coram came from Coxhaven to

Hamburg he went from thence to Holygland, having heard some of the Cargoe and other things of the Ship was Carry'd there, where several of the Fishermen (one of which was a Rhoadsman or Majestrate in that Iland) acknowledg'd they were at Coxhaven and had a hand in Spoyleing & Robing the said Ship, but the said Coram finding the Majestrate there (who are all or the most of them working ffishermen) to be so favourable to their Bretheren that he was not suffer'd to propose any Question To them whereby he could have gained the better light into the whole Confederating at Coxhaven for destroying the said Ship and Cargoe.

" THOMAS CORAM.

" Jurat coram me, that the contents of this paper are true To his certain knowledge

" Hamburgh, June 2d, 1719.

" C. J. VICH [?]."

The Latin formula of attestation at the foot of this document suggests that the British Consul took humorous notice of Coram's name, for the three preceding affidavits give the formula in English.

There is nothing on record as to Coram or " Thomas Pearse, of London, Esqre," obtaining any redress for their loss.

It is uncertain whether this disastrous voyage marks the close of Coram's life afloat, but he seems to have given up seafaring life for shipping business in London about this time. Brownlow [1] suggests that he had saved enough money to retire. But this seems inconsistent with the evidence afforded by the old seaman's pocket-book for 1729—ten years after the loss of the *Seaflower*—and containing later entries. This interesting relic, handsomely bound, is preserved at the Foundling. It shows that Coram still carried on business, for we find various records of payments ranging from hundreds of pounds for cargoes of saltpetre down to pence disbursed to boatmen. At this time he may have been fairly affluent, but wealth he never amassed nor wished to gain. Detached from self-interest he was the more at liberty to devote himself to the causes he had at heart—the welfare of his country and the expansion of Greater Britain.

With increasing force and success he influenced public opinion by making his ideas known to prominent men. By sheer persistence he came to the front. When the

[1] *History . . . of the Foundling Hospital*, p. 10.

Colony of Georgia was founded in 1732 under Oglethorpe, Coram was appointed one of its trustees,—a considerable distinction to be conferred on a merchant skipper and shipwright. On the parchment Patent Roll of 5 George II. his name comes last on the list of trustees, as his modesty would have made him desire; and as he was not on the Council (a smaller body chosen out of the whole number) his part would be consultative rather than executive. He could supply the Council with expert information.

Coram went to see the first colonists set out for Georgia. This we know from his letter to Henry Newman in 1732. Mr. Newman was Secretary to the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. and Agent for New Hampshire. The letter was printed in *Notes and Queries*, 8th Series, vol. iv. p. 266, from Macray's Catalogue of MSS. in the Rawlinson collection in the Bodleian Library. It is of great interest for its references to Georgia and Oglethorpe, to Coram's boyhood, to his lack of education, and to his residence at the time of writing.

"Good Sir by this you se your kindly doing me one favour on the 10th Instant draws on you

the Trouble of being requested to do another. I have been at Gravesend to see the Little Colony saill from thence for Georgia. I writ the Inclosed rough Paragraph whilst at Gravesend & came from thence the night before last I request you will vouchsafe to give it such abreviations, alterations & amendments as you may judge necessary agreeable to the Sence I have in a very dull manner put it into, but I cannot Wonder at my own awkwardness in such Matters when I consider I went to sea at 11½ years old several years before King Charles ye 2d dyed & as I could never speak good English how is it possible I should write good Gramer. I humbly ask pardon for presuming to give you this Trouble & hope you will pardon the Trespass.

" I am with most profound Respect
" Sir Your most obdient Sert
" Thomas Coram.

" 20th Novemr 1732."

" at No. 5 in Prescotstreet in Goodmans fields where please to send the Inclosd when Corrected.

" P.S. If you have not one of the Stitched Books containing about 40 or 5 (*sic*) pages wch Mr. Oglethorpe had printed entitled Select Tracts relating to Colonys I will inclose one of them to you if you will please to permit me.

" T. C.

"To Henry Newman Esqr."

It would be interesting to know what were the documents edited by Mr. Newman, and whether any of Coram's numerous petitions, etc., were subjected to the same friendly revision.

Prescott Street still exists, though much changed since 1732 and with an altered environment, not far from Aldgate. It was possibly the first street in London to have its houses numbered.[1] In 1741 the London Hospital removed thither from Featherstone Street, and the great Institution carried on its work there until 1757, when it was transferred to its present premises in Whitechapel High Road. In the vacated building in Prescott Street the Magdalen Hospital, England's earliest penitentiary, began its work in 1758.[2] John Entick, writing in 1766, describes the houses on the Goodman estate as

"in general very good, commodious, & high brick houses, inhabited chiefly by such as have their business at 'Change, or in public offices." [3]

[1] H. A. Harben, *Dictionary of London*, p. 272.

[2] H. F. B. Compston, *The Magdalen Hospital*, pp. 41, 60.

[3] *History and Survey of London*, etc., vol. iv. p. 310.

There was a tavern called the Ship, and near it a popular theatre[1] where in 1741 David Garrick made his first appearance.

Coram's work as Trustee for Georgia must have enlarged his circle of acquaintance and extended his influence. It is interesting to find that the Accountant to the Trustees, Mr. Harman Verelst, became the first Secretary of the Foundling Hospital. It is not unlikely that Coram met John Wesley when the latter went out to Georgia as S.P.G. missionary in 1735.

One could wish for more detailed information as to Coram's share in the arrangements made by the Trustees for the welfare of the new colony. He would probably vote with the majority in their decision to prohibit the introduction of negro slaves into Georgia. Later on the shortage of unskilled labourers unfortunately led to the sanction of the slave trade there. Another trade at first prohibited was that in rum: this decision was not long afterwards annulled by the Government.

As Trustee of a Crown Colony Coram rapidly became known in the higher reaches

[1] J. P. Malcolm, *Manners and Customs of London.*

of public life. In a letter written in 1735 to Sir Robert Walpole by his brother Horace, afterwards Lord Wolterton, the uncle of the Horace Walpole of Literature, occurs this passage in reference to colonial discussions in Parliament—

"Loose noe time in talking to Sir Charles Wager, Mr. Bladen, & one Coram, the honestest, the most disinterested, & the most knowing person about the plantations, I ever talked with." [1]

The value of this unsolicited testimonial is the more evident when we remember that Walpole at the time of writing it was British Ambassador at the Hague, and that such a person would be able to gauge the character and parts of those with whom he had to do. And Coram *coram* Wager and Bladen is in good company. Both the latter gentlemen were well-known authorities on colonial questions. Martin Bladen's name occurs on many a state document of the period, for he was a Commissioner for Trade and Plantations. It is pleasant to find Sir Charles Wager

[1] Coxe, *Life of Sir Robert Walpole*, iii. p. 243. Quoted with slight inaccuracy by Brownlow, *History*, etc., p. 11.

at a later time associated with Coram in philanthropic work; he joined the original Committee of the Foundling Hospital.

But Coram was not the sort of man to be content to bask in the favour or the condescension of distinguished people. He must ever be up and doing. No sooner is the colony of Georgia in being but he works hard for the establishment, or rather the extension, of another settlement, this time in Nova Scotia,—one of the most important provinces to-day in the Dominion of Canada, with fisheries representing something like a third part of the wealth of the entire Dominion. He had long had this in view. Murdoch states that, as early as 1718, "Captain Coram, a famous projector," had "busied himself in a scheme for settling Nova Scotia, and the lands between Nova Scotia and the province of Maine." [1] He now succeeded in winning the Government to his views. The following Memorial, given by Brownlow in a modernized form, is here printed from a contemporary copy; and Coram's footnote,

[1] Beamish Murdoch, *History of Nova Scotia*, 1865, vol. i. p. 350. Cf. vol. ii. p. 200.

hitherto unpublished, is added.[1] The Memorial was read in Council on April 3, 1735, and was referred to a Committee who, on May 1, referred it to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations. The latter body considered it on June 27.

"*To the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council*

"The Memorial of Thomas Coram, Gentleman, most humbley sheweth,—

"That your Memorialist having through long Experience in Naval affaires, and by residing many years in yo^r^ Majestie's plantations in America observed with attention several Matters and things which he conceives might be greatly improved for the Honour and service of the Crown and the Increase of the Trade, Navigation and Wealth of this Kingdom; he, therefore, most humbley begs leave to Represent to your Majesty,—

"That the Coasts of your Majestie's Province of *Nova Scotia* afford the best Codd-fishing of any in the known parts of the world and the Land is well adapted for Raising Hemp and other Naval stores, for the better Supplying this kingdome with the same, But the Discouragements have hitherto been such as have deterr'd people from

[1] Foundling Hospital Library, vol. 28 (MSS.), pp. 203, 204. Cf. p. 206.

settling there Whereby the said Province through want of good Inhabitants is not so beneficial to this Kingdome, nor so well secured to the Crown as it might be, because it cannot be presumed the French inhabitants who remain there by virtue of the Treaty whereby *Nova Scotia* was surrender'd to Great Britain anno 1710 being all Papist, would be faithfull to your Majestie's interest in Case of a War between Great Britain and France.

"Your Memorialist therefore most humbley Conceives That it would be highly conducive to the Intrest of this Kingdome to settle without Loss of Time a competant number of Industrious Protestant Families in the said province which is the Northern Frontier of your Majestie's Dominions in America, under a civil Government to be Established by y^r^ Majesty conformable in all its Branches as near as may be to the Constitution of England, w^ch^ seems to be the most probable, if not the only means of Peopleing this Province which Experience shews could not be effected under y^e^ Military Government that hath been exercised there upward of Twenty-four years past, and of giving effectual Encouragement to the Codd-fishery That valuable Branch of the British Commerce, w^ch^ hath declined very much of late years in proportion as the French have advanced therein.

"Your Memorialist further begs leave to observe that the French are Masters of the best Salt in the World for Cureing Fish Whereas the English are

obliged to have what Salt they use, from Foreign Dominions which make it highly Necessary to secure a Perpetual supply of salt in your Majestie's Dominions in America That we may not depend on a precarious Supply of that Commodity from the Dominions of other Princes, And yo[r] Memorialist humbley Conceives That the Island of Exuma, which is one of the Bahamas, would afford sufficient quantities of Salt for all your Majestie's subjects in North America provided Cat Island another of the Bahamas lying to Windward of Exuma was well settled and put in such a posture as to be able to Cover Exuma and Protect y[e] Salt Rakers from the Depredations of the Spaniards of Baracoa (the settling of Cat Island would be otherwise vastly advantageous to y[e] Crown) and Provided the unreasonable Demand of the Tenth of all Salt Raked there be abolished, for want of which Encouragements the salt ponds of Exuma have hitherto been useless to the Publick.

"To these purposes your Memorialist humbley lays the annexed Petition at your Majestie's feet, and beggs leave to add That there are several Honble and worthy Persons ready to accept and act in the Trust therein discribed, if yo[r] Majesty shall be pleased to Grant your Royal letters Patent for that Purpose.

"Wherefore he most humbley prays your Majesty to order That this Memoriall, together with the Petition hereunto annexed, and whatever your

Memorialist shall have occasion* further to offer concerning the same may be taken into consideration and that your Majesty will be Graciously pleas'd to do therein as to your Majesty in your great Wisdome and Goodness shall seem proper.

"And he will ever pray, &c., &c.

"THOMAS CORAM.

* "The Memorialist had sufficiently Experienced that without it should be mentioned in the prayer of the Petition, the Commissioners for Trade & Plantations would not take into their consideration anything further than what should be Expressly Contained in the Order to them."

This Memorial was supported by a Petition signed by more than a hundred working men suffering from the competition and the overstocked labour market of London, and anxious to be "settled securely in some of the Plantations of America." They ask for a free passage to Nova Scotia, and for a civil government when they settle there as like that of England as practicable. The hand of Coram is visible in this Petition, not least perhaps in the reference to the "temptations which always attend poverty." He was peculiarly fitted for promoting emigration. Himself a colonist, and a seaman who had

crossed the Atlantic many times, the foundation of a colony was something he could visualize in all its details. He was in touch both with influential people and the poor; and he had the determination to get things done.

Coram's proposals were seriously considered. He sent the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations further information in July; and he appeared before them several times in 1735–7 in order to go more fully into details. The result was that, after mature deliberation, the Commissioners came to the following conclusion, in a document dated April 22, 1737:—

"The settlement of Nova Scotia with English inhabitants is of very great consequence to his Majesty's interest in America, and to the interest of this kingdom, from its situation with regard to the French, and from the fishery now carried on at Conso, and the several branches of naval stores that province is capable of producing, when once it shall be settled, as we have several times represented to his Majesty and to your lordships, particularly in our report of the 7th June, 1727; and therefore, we think it very much for his Majesty's service, to give all possible encouragement

to any undertaking for this purpose, especially when attended with so great an appearance and probability of success as that of Mr. Coram's now under our consideration."

It must have been a great disappointment to Coram, to his working-men petitioners, and to many more people, when this auspicious beginning was followed by a delay of many years. Had Coram been in Parliament, or had his friends there shared in his tireless energy, Halifax, N.S., would have been founded years earlier than 1749. It is pleasant to reflect that he lived to see his ideas carried out. Did the old mariner (he was then over eighty) watch the expedition set out under the command of Cornwallis, as he had watched the departure for Georgia seventeen years earlier? There were 2576 emigrants in the thirteen transports that anchored in Chebuctoo Bay, and very soon after their arrival Halifax was in being.[1] It was more than thirty years since Coram had first suggested such a settlement.

The very chequered history of Nova Scotia in the eighteenth century may to some extent

[1] D. Campbell, *Nova Scotia*, pp. 98, 99.

explain, if it cannot wholly excuse, the strange neglect of Coram's work by historians. The present writer has consulted numerous books on Nova Scotia and has found not a word about Coram except in Beamish Murdoch ; [1] and probably few citizens of Halifax, N.S., are aware that the first settlers there virtually owed their new home to the projector of the Foundling Hospital in London. A lady at the lecture on Coram referred to in the Preface of the present work, stated that as a girl in Halifax she had seen an old print representing a boat being rowed to the shore, and that one of the occupants was indicated as "Coram." No one could give her any information as to the bearing of this picture on the history of the city.

But in his own days Coram's work was recognized not only by statesmen, as we have seen, but by the public. For a popular contemporary estimate take the following lines from the *Scandalizade* (1750), where he is clearly regarded as virtually a founder of Nova Scotia. After a friendly allusion to Hogarth's portrait of Coram, the old Captain

[1] *Supra*, p. 69, footnote.

is represented as bewailing the jobbery and corruption that had crept into the government of Nova Scotia :—

" Malcontented, he cry'd, 'tis with Sorrow I see
A scheme made a Job of, projected by me.
This same Nova Scotia will hardly succeed.
To provide for a Lobster [1] abroad was the Deed,
Boundry Commissi'ners, & Agents, & Clerks,
Loungers, & Leaches, & such kind of Sharks."

Then a certain architect is introduced—described as " Like the Church he erected, expensively dull "—who

" Address'd the old Captain ; prithee why dost thou sob ?
Nova Scotia's in very good hands for a jobb :
For is not the Government civil forsooth !
With all its free Laws in the Governor's mouth ? "

When Halifax shall have recovered from the terrible catastrophe which evoked such universal sympathy, it would be a graceful act on the part of its rebuilders to make some kind of memorial, however simple, to one who deserves so well of the Empire and of Halifax as Thomas Coram.

It might have been supposed that Coram's interest in the colonies relaxed when in the

[1] The red-coated British soldier.

midst of his work for the Foundling. Yet in 1739 we find him going to the Duke of Newcastle (then Secretary for State) bearing the following letter, which does not appear to have been published. The complaint has reference to fraudulent paper money.

[Newcastle Papers, Add. 32,692, f. 536.]

"My Lord

"I had the hon^{r} to present to your Grace about 13 months past, a Memorial at Clermont setting forth some pernicious Frauds & abuses Continually practised in some of the Northern parts of New England greatly to y^{e} Prejudice of the Crown and preventing the Increase of settlements in those parts.

"One of those practitioners is lately come over hither for accomplishing their further Vile Designs against His Majesty Intrest in y^{e} said Plantations Wherefore I Request to be permitted to speak to your Grace thereon

"I am wth the Greatest Respect
"may it please your Grace
"Your Grace's
"most obedient Serv^{t}
"Thomas Coram
"Now in the Hall.

"The Duke of Newcastle."

"Now in the Hall." One thinks of a "queue." In those days the word meant the tail of a wig, and Coram wore his own abundant hair. But queues, in a sense unpleasantly familiar in this era of rations, were formed often enough in the eighteenth century at the doors of theatres and fashionable churches, and in the lobbies or anterooms of the mansions of the great. How long did the petitioner—vigilant guardian of his Majesty's interests—have to wait before he obtained a hearing ?

Among other instances of Coram's interest in colonial matters recorded by Brocklesby is a pleasant little story [1] which may bring this chapter to a close. English hat-manufacturers were much exercised by colonial interference in foreign markets. Coram went into the matter and decided that the colonists were in the wrong. He exerted himself successfully in adjusting matters. The hatters were so grateful that they desired to present their benefactor with a sum of money. "But Captain Coram had a notion, that if a man's hands were not empty, they

[1] Quoted by Brownlow, *History*, etc., pp. 23, 24.

could not long be clean: he had a just sense of their gratitude, but did not care to have it expressed by any other present than that of a hat, which he received as often as he had occasion, and, which in its size, spoke the good wishes of the makers in a very legible character."

Is Coram entitled to the appellation of "Empire-Builder"? It depends, of course, upon the connotation we give the term. He has not left a name as famous as that of a Clive or a Rhodes. But though not perhaps a Master-Builder, he did fine service as an expert subordinate in the great task of Building. Without education or social advantages, and with no special equipment save seamanship, sincerity, and shrewdness, he either originated, or bore his part in, measures that tended greatly to the advancement of this Commonwealth and of another then unborn. It has taken many men, at sundry times and in divers manners, to raise the edifice of Empire; and among its Builders Thomas Coram is entitled to a worthy place.

VI

THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL: CORAM THE PHILANTHROPIST

THIS chapter may not unfittingly begin with some verses written by Lord Tenterden [1] for one of the annual dinners at the Foundling Hospital.

"The ship sail'd smoothly o'er the sea,
By gentle breezes fann'd,
When Coram, musing at the helm,
This happy fabric plann'd:
Not in the schools by sages taught
To woo fair virtue's form;
But nursed on danger's flinty lap,
And tutor'd by the storm.

"When threat'ning tempests round him rag'd,
And swelling billows heav'd,
His bark a wretched orphan seem'd,
Of aid and hope bereav'd.

[1] Baron Tenterden of Hendon, Lord Chief Justice, who presided at the trial of the Cato Street conspirators and at other State trials, was a zealous governor of the Foundling. He died in 1832, and by his own desire was buried there; his body rests not far from that of Captain Coram, in the vaults under the Chapel.

If through the clouds a golden gleam
Broke sweetly from above,
He bless'd the smiling emblem there
Of charity and love.

"Around the glowing land he spread
Warm pity's magic spell,
And tender bosoms learn'd from him
With softer sighs to swell.
Beauty and wealth, and wit and power
The various aid combin'd;
And angels smiled upon the work
That Coram had design'd.

"Virtue and meekness mark'd his face
With characters benign,
And Hogarth's colours yet display
The lineaments divine;
Our ground his ashes sanctify,
Our songs his praise employs;
His spirit with the bless'd above
His full reward enjoys."

The poem suggests that Coram's interest in forsaken children began while he yet followed the sea. But his real work on their behalf dates from about the year 1720, when he took up his residence at Rotherhithe. Rotherhithe was a much pleasanter spot then than it is now. But his environment was very different from what he had experienced hitherto—different from Lyme Regis, or the

rolling expanse of the Atlantic, or Boston and Taunton. His business journeys to and from the City often required an early start and a late return. And frequently in the dim dawn or in the moonlight he was horrified to see by the roadside dead babies: they had been murdered, or else abandoned to the chances of charity or starvation.

Such sights could not fail to stir Coram to the very depth of his heart. Here was something that made clamant appeal to the two noble passions of philanthropy and patriotism. Those infants might have lived to become useful citizens at home or in the plantations.

The Poor Law had failed to avert their fate. Nowadays conditions have, thanks in no small degree to Coram himself, so changed for the better that innumerable journeys from Rotherhithe to the Royal Exchange can be undertaken without the disagreeable likelihood of seeing deserted babes on dung-hills. Had better provision existed in his days Coram might never have planned his Charity—which would have been a loss to England; or he might have projected one

on different lines—which would have been a greater gain. Guilford Street might have had its Coram Orphanage. As things were then, however, he could find no other way of saving children for the nation than that afforded by a Foundling Hospital on lines more or less similar to those of such Institutions on the Continent. England was latest in the field in work of this kind, though the idea of it was not new, as witness *e.g.* the history of Christ's Hospital and its period of "Foundlingism." [1] Coram was England's St. Vincent de Paul.

The way had been prepared for the promotion of a Foundling Hospital by Joseph Addison. Brownlow does not mention him. But in the *Guardian*, No. 105 (1713), Addison printed an essay which foreshadows so closely the path taken by Coram that it is difficult not to suppose that he had read this powerful appeal.[2]

[1] E. H. Pearce, *Annals of Christ's Hospital*, pp. 26, 35, 36, 38, 198, 246.

[2] Similarly the way for the first English Penitentiary was prepared by the *Rambler*, No. 107. H. F. Bompston, *The Magdalen Hospital*, p. 21, etc.

Addison begins with some lines from Ovid (*Amores* II. Eleg: xiv. 35–38)—

"Quod neque in Armeniis tigres fecere latebris :
Perdere nec fœtus ausa Leæna suos.
At teneræ faciunt, sed non impunè, puellæ ;
Sæpe, suos utero quæ necat, ipsa perit."

They are thus rendered—

"The tigresses that haunt th' Armenian wood,
Will spare their proper young, tho' pinch'd for food !
Nor will the Lybian lionesses slay
Their whelps : but women are more fierce than they,
More barbarous to the tender fruit they bear ;
Nor Nature's call, tho' loud she cries, will hear.
But righteous vengeance oft their crimes pursues,
And they are lost themselves who would their children lose."

After speaking of a recent gathering of Charity Schools "in that part of the Strand which reaches from the May-pole to Exeter-change," and the lessons it suggests, he proceeds—

"Since I am upon this subject, I shall mention a piece of charity which has not yet been exerted among us, and which deserves our attention the more, because it is practised by most of the nations about us. I mean a provision for foundlings, or for those children who, through want of such a

provision, are exposed to the barbarity of cruel and unnatural parents. One does not know how to speak on such a subject without horror; but what multitudes of infants have been made away by those who brought them into the world, and were afterwards either ashamed, or unable to provide for them!

"There is scarce an assizes where some unhappy wretch is not executed for the murder of a child. And how many more of these monsters of inhumanity may we suppose to be wholly undiscovered, or cleared for want of legal evidence! Not to mention those, who by unnatural practices, do in some measure defeat the intentions of Providence, and destroy their conceptions even before they see the light. In all these the guilt is equal, though the punishment is not so. But to pass by the greatness of the crime (which is not to be expressed by words) if we only consider it as it robs the commonwealth of its full number of citizens, it certainly deserves the utmost application and wisdom of a people to prevent it.

"It is certain, that which generally betrays these profligate women into it, and overcomes the tenderness which is natural to them on other occasions, is the fear of shame, or their inability to support those whom they give life to."

He then shows "how this evil is prevented in other countries"—in the Foundling

Hospitals at Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, Rome; and the essay ends with these words—

"This, I think, is a subject that deserves our most serious consideration, for which reason I hope I shall not be thought impertinent in laying it before my readers."

Coram emphasized the need of giving a refuge to women "to hide their shame"; and the very first meeting of the Foundling Committee took steps to find how the problem had been dealt with on the Continent. Like Addison, too, he felt strongly on the loss to the State of its children.

Owing probably either to this essay, or to Coram's campaign, or both, several persons bequeathed money for a Foundling Hospital if ever such a Charity should be founded in England.[1]

A feature of some interest in Coram's work for the proposed Hospital is his success in winning the help of influential women. This seems quite a new thing in eighteenth-century Charity. Twenty-one ladies "of

[1] There is an allusion to this in Coram's petition (p. 92). The first of such legacies received by the Foundling was Josiah Wordsworth's—£500.

Quality and Distinction" led the way, under the old mariner's guidance, with a petition to the King. A second petition, from Noblemen and Gentlemen, is dated at Knowsley Hall, Lancashire, in December, 1735, signed by Lord Derby and fifty-one other important men. There is a contemporary copy of this document at the Foundling (Lib. MS. vol. 6). The petition is brief and to the point, referring to the Ladies' "subscription," and commending the project and the appeal for a Charter of Incorporation. A third petition was that of numerous Justices of the Peace, residing in or near London, and other "Persons of Distinction," to the same effect.

Heralded thus magnificently Coram's appeal follows. The petition bears every sign of originality and is Coram's own. It is here printed, apparently for the first time, from a contemporary copy at the Foundling (Lib. MS. vols. 6 and 31).

"*To the King's most Excellent Majesty in Council*

"The Memorial & Petition of Thomas Coram Gent[n] in behalf of great numbers of Helpless Infants daily exposed to Destruction

"Most humbley Sheweth

"That many Ladys of Quality and Distinction being deeply touched with Concern for the frequent Murders committed on poor Miserable Infant Children at their Birth by their Cruel Parents to hide their Shame and for the Inhumane Custom of exposing Newborn Children to Perish in the Streets or the putting out of such unhappy Foundlings to wicked and barbarous Nurses who undertaking to bring them up for a small and trifling Sum of Money do often suffer them to Starve for want of due Sustenance and Care Or if permitted to live either turn them into the Streets to begg or steal or Hire them out to Vicious persons by whom they are trained up in that infamous way of living Whereby Thefts Robberys and Murders do grievously abound, and some of those Miserable Infants are Blinded or Maimed or Distorted in their Limbs in order to move Pity & Compassion and thereby become the fitter Instruments of gain to those Vile, Mercyless Wretches.

"That in order to redress such deplorable Grievances and prevent as well the effusion of so much innocent blood as the fatal Consequences of that Idleness Beggary or Stealing in which such poor Foundlings are Generally bred up, and to enable them by an Early and

Effectual Care of their Education to become useful Members of y^e^ Common Wealth The said Ladys in their Tender Compassion for the Sufferings and lamentable Condition of such poor abandoned helpless Infants as well as the enormous abuses and Mischiefs to which they are exposed and for the better producing good and faithful Servants from such Miserable, Cast off Children or Foundlings now a Pest to the Publick and a Chargeable Nuisance within the Bills of Mortality and for Settling a Yearly income for their Maintenance and proper Education until they come to fit age for Service Have in a written Instrument Declared they are desirous to encourage and Willing to Contribute towards the Erecting an Hospital after the Example of France Holland and other Christian Countrys and Supporting the Same for the Reception Maintenance and proper Education of such abandoned helpless Infants which they Conceive will not only prevent many Horrid Murders Cruelties and other Mischiefs But be greatly beneficial to the Publick.

"That many Noblemen and Gentlemen highly approving the said Ladys Charitable inclinations Have by another Instrument in Writing Declared their hearty Concurrence for advancing to the utmost of their power so Humane and Christian an Undertaking

Promising each for himself that whenever Your Majesty may be Graciously pleas'd to Grant Letters Patent for the more effectual carrying on so useful a Designe they will readily employ their Interests in Recommending and Contributions in Supporting an Hospital in or near London for the Reception Virtuous Education & usefull Training up of all such helpless Infants as may be brought to it.

"That many of Your Majesties Justices of the Peace within the Bills of Mortality and other Persons of Distinction Sensible of the great Necessity there now is for such an Hospital Have by another Written Instrument set forth That a Foundation of this kind Established under good Management would not only save the lives of Many of your Majesties Subjects but be a Meanes of rendering them useful to the Publick either in the Sea or Land Service And that a Designe so humane and Charitable as rescuing helpless Infants from inevitable Destruction cannot fail of being Encouraged by many Rich well disposed persons, and highly recommending the Obtaining Your Majesties Royal Charter of Incorporation to such Persons as your Majesty shall think fit to enable to receive and apply the Charitys of such well disposed Persons in such manner and under Regulations as may best answer so laudable a Purpose

"That many other Charitable Rich Persons have promised to Contribute liberally towards so Excellent a Work as soon as your Majesty may be pleas'd to Grant your Royal Letters Patent for that good Purpose Several Legacys of Persons Deceas'd have been bequeath'd for the Same to be paid by their Executors when any such Hospital shall be properly established here.

"May it therefore Please your Most Gracious Majesty to Grant your Royal Charter for Incorporating such Persons as your Majesty shall think fit for the receiving and disposing the Charities of your Majesties good Subjects for the Erecting and Supporting an *Hospital* for the Reception Maintenance and proper Education of such Cast off Children or Foundlings as may be brought to it in order to be made good Servants and when Qualified to dispose of them either to the Sea or Land Service in such manner and under such Regulations as to your Majesty in your great Wisdom may seem meet.

"And your Petitioner Shall as in Duty ever pray &c:

"THOMAS CORAM."

This Petition, which is undated, came before the King in Council on the 21st of

July, 1737, and was referred to a Committee. On the 29th of July the Committee referred it to the Attorney and Solicitor-General "to Examin into y^e^ same together with such Proposals or Heads of a Charter as M^r^ Coram shall lay before them" and to report to the Committee.

Another petition to Royalty met with scant attention — that addressed to the Princess Amelia, daughter of George II. The actual document, in a beautiful, "copper-plate" hand-writing, is preserved at the Foundling; and on it is the following note in Coram's own hand:—

"On Innocents' Day, the 28th of December, 1737, I went to St. James's Palace to present this Petition, having been advised first to address the Lady of the Bedchamber in waiting to introduce it. But the Lady Isabella Finch, who was the Lady in waiting, gave me very rough Words, and bid me begone with my Petition, which I did, without Opportunity of presenting it."

It is quite likely that Lady Isabella lived to regret her incivility to an old man who was toiling so unweariedly and unselfishly in a good cause; and not unlikely that later on

she may have joined with other smart ladies in making the Foundling gardens a resort of fashion.

There must have been many to whom Coram brought his petition who gave him rough words and bade him begone; and before relating the success of his application for a Charter it is worth while to reflect upon the difficulties he had to encounter.

These difficulties were of a nature he had not experienced hitherto. On questions relating to colonies or trade he was an expert. In sociology he was but an amateur. His task was to influence public opinion and at the same time to clarify his own ideas as to precise objects and methods. Brocklesby [1] says that "he began, in respect to this design, as he did in all others, with making it the topic of his conversation, that he might learn the sentiments of other men, and from thence form some notion whether what he had in view was practicable." His opportunities were great, for he was known personally to a good many influential people who trusted him. And the fact that he was at work on

[1] Quoted by Brownlow, *History*, etc., p. 25.

his project for seventeen years before succeeding suggests that he met with much discouragement and opposition. This was indeed to be looked for. The objections that could be urged against the idea of a Foundling Hospital were obvious and serious enough. Would not such an Institution tend to increase illegitimacy? Would it not smooth the path of vice? Would not the remedy be worse than the malady? Coram would, without doubt, meet with such criticism as was afterwards expressed so freely when the Foundling was actually at work. The theme of a coarse satire in wretched doggerel entitled, *Joyful News to Batchelors and Maids: being a Song in praise of the Fondling Hospital, and the London Hospital, Aldersgate Street,*[1] is that young people may have their fling. Every accommodation is offered them. The woman can lie in at Aldersgate Street and get rid of her bantling at the "Fondling." The verses end with the wish that Coram, as his reward, may "with mighty Jove for ever dwell."

Of much higher literary quality, but

[1] There is a copy in the British Museum. It is undated.

equally coarse, is the criticism in the *Scandalizade* (1750): the "expensively dull" architect, after his remarks about Nova Scotia (*supra*, p. 77) proceeds—

> "But this is not all the Effects of thy Pains.
> The *Hospital Foundling* came out of thy Brains,
> To encourage the progress of vulgar Amours,
> The breeding of rogues & th' increasing of Whores,
> While the children of honest good Husbands & Wives
> Stand exposed to oppression & Want all their Lives."

The critic then goes on to utter scurrilous insinuations against Coram's moral character.

Where criticism is sincere and without malice good may follow. To hear different opinions from all sorts and conditions of men for seventeen years would on the whole be advantageous to Coram. It would force him to think out his problems in all their bearings. The present writer is inclined to believe that Coram went into the work with his eyes open to its risks, and that the Foundling Hospital represents a venture of faith. It seems probable that he relied on the wise support of the men whom he succeeded in

winning to his side. Your eighteenth-century unprofessional philanthropists were business men willing to devote time and thought, as well as money, to the Charities they administered. A Foundling Hospital was an experiment, and its success depended largely on the character of its Committee and officers. Notice Coram's emphatic words, at the Governors' first meeting, that the success of the undertaking could only be secured if "due and proper care be taken for setting on foot so necessary an establishment." [1] Among contemporary Governors of the Foundling were men like Jonas Hanway, Robert Dingley, John Thornton, Sir Hans Sloane, the Speaker (Onslow); and it was men of that *calibre* who sooner or later were attracted to the great cause.

Through good report and ill, through fine weather and foul, the old mariner had held on his course; and by the autumn of 1739 he brought his bark to port. A Charter of Incorporation, dated October 17, 1739, was granted to—not the "Foundling" Hospital, to which term it has no legal title, but—the

[1] Brownlow, *History*, etc., p. 4.

Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children.

The Charter was read at a general meeting of supporters on Tuesday, November 20, 1739, at Somerset House. It was a distinguished gathering. There were six Dukes, eleven Earls, and numerous other noble Lords and Gentlemen. Prominent among the Commoners was Hogarth. One of the principal speakers was Richard Mead, the foremost physician in England. The newspapers and magazines of the time have reports of the proceedings, and Coram's speech to the President, the Duke of Bedford, is fortunately on record.[1] Coram probably read his speech, and its brevity suggests the pruning hand of a friend—

"My Lord Duke of Bedford,

"It is with inexpressible pleasure I now present your Grace, at the head of this noble and honourable corporation, with his Majesty's royal charter, for establishing an Hospital for exposed children, free of all expense, through the assistance of some compassionate great ladies, and other good persons.

[1] Given in full by Brocklesby, quoted by Brownlow, *History*, etc., pp. 28, 29.

"I can, my lord, sincerely aver, that nothing would have induced me to embark in a design so full of difficulties and discouragements, but a zeal for the service of his Majesty, in preserving the lives of great numbers of his innocent subjects.

"The long and melancholy experience of this nation has too demonstrably shewn, with what barbarity tender infants have been exposed and destroyed, for want of proper means of preventing the disgrace, and succouring the necessities of their parents.

"The charter will disclose the extensive nature and end of this Charity, in much stronger terms than I can possibly pretend to describe them, so that I have only to thank your Grace and many other noble personages, for all that favourable protection which hath given life and spirit to my endeavours.

"My Lord, although my declining years will not permit me to hope seeing the full accomplishment of my wishes, yet I can now rest satisfied, and it is what I esteem an ample reward of more than seventeen years' expensive labour and steady application, that I see your Grace at the head of this charitable trust, assisted by so many noble and honourable Governors.

"Under such powerful influences and directions, I am confident of the final success of my endeavours, and that the public will one day reap the happy and lasting fruits of your Grace's and this Corporation's measures, and as long as my life and poor

abilities endure, I shall not abate of my zealous wishes and most active services for the good and prosperity of this truly noble and honourable Corporation."

The first Committee Meeting was held on November 29 at "Mr. Manaton's great Room in the Strand," the well-known Crown and Anchor tavern. The President and thirty members attended. Here Coram produced the seal of the Corporation, *Sigillum Hospitii Infantum Expositorum Londinensis.*

There was plenty for the Committee to do. Where was the Hospital to begin its work? Coram had waited so long that he is said to have wished to begin forthwith by erecting an encampment under canvas in Lamb's Conduit Fields.[1] If so, he had hit upon the very site on which the Governors later on decided to build. The search for temporary premises took some time, but by December, 1740, the Committee had secured the house in Hatton Garden formerly occupied

[1] *Observations on the Foundling Hospital*, printed for private distribution amongst the Governors (undated: *cir.* 1840–1850), p. 8. Brownlow may have written this pamphlet.

by Sir Francis Tench. It was opposite the still existing Charity School. The first Meeting of the Committee there was held on January 10, 1740 (N.S. 1741), when a Sub-Committee was appointed to arrange for furnishing the buildings. By March a Staff had been chosen and the Foundlings soon made their appearance. The first boy and girl baptized (by Mr. Smith, of All Hallows, London Wall, who officiated *gratis*) were named Thomas and Eunice Coram respectively; and there has always been a child thus commemorating the Founder or his wife ever since then in the Foundling Hospital.

Coram attended diligently to Committee work. He did not rest on his oars. Things great and small secured his careful notice. The following little note to Sir Hans Sloane has not, apparently, been published hitherto: it probably refers to some assistant, or to a child in the family of one of the foster mothers to whose care the Foundlings were, as now, committed—

[Sloane MSS. 4057, 81.]

"Hon^{D} Sir

"I request your favour to this pretty Girle who has long had a sore Eye but has not yet been able to obtain any Relief for it. I humbley ask your Pardon for this Freedome.

"I am with the Greatest Respect

"Hon^{d} Sir—

"Your Hon^{rs}

"most obedient Servant

"Thomas Coram.

"28 October 1741."

An interesting little item of business occurs in the Minutes of this first year at Hatton Garden—the repayment of the money expended by Coram in connexion with the Charter, from April 17, 1738, to the time of Incorporation. The legal fees, etc., amounted to £217. It was in anticipation of this outlay that Coram wrote to a friend—

"The Fees will be more than 200 guineas to prepare and pass the Charter . . . notwithstanding it is on so compassionate a case, but I am told & do believe, if it was to prevent the abolishing of Christianity out of the World no Lawyer nor Office man would abate of his Fees." [1]

[1] H. A. Hill, *Thomas Coram in Boston and Taunton*, p. 16.

We must now notice a mournful episode in the life of Coram and the history of the Foundling—his exclusion from its governing body. This took place as early as 1741, before the present buildings were even begun. Brownlow supposed that the rupture was due to some difference with regard to the policy of the Committee.[1] The real reason was a more personal one, and has never hitherto been put on record.

At a meeting of the General Committee, October 21, 1741, it was reported that a letter had been received, signed only with two initials, intimating that there were "many irregularities" in the Hospital and that discreditable rumours were in circulation. A Sub-Committee was at once appointed to examine this matter. On November 9 it reported that certain stories spread by nurses were untrue and malicious. These stories had reflected on the character of two members of the Committee. The Sub-Committee gave it as their belief that "Mr. Thomas Coram, one of the Governors of this

[1] *History*, etc., p. 6. Cf. *Observations on the Foundling Hospital* (Anon: n.d.), p. 7.

Hospital," had been "principally concerned in promoting and spreading the said aspersions." Coram and his friend, Dr. Nesbitt, who seems to have been implicated in this affair, though not censured, were both under the displeasure of their colleagues and were "sent to Coventry." [1]

Perhaps Coram had been unable to work harmoniously with some of the Committee and was too ready to listen to gossip about them. He ought, of course, to have confronted them with any facts to their discredit. It is, however, very difficult to imagine him as a back-stairs conspirator. We do not know all the facts of the case, for a sealed *dossier* on the subject had disappeared before the middle of last century.

The incident soon brought to a close Coram's active participation in the affairs of the Hospital. The last Committee he ever attended was that on May 5, 1742. He was present at the Annual Court in the week following (May 12) and was not re-elected. His last vote was given against the otherwise

[1] *Minutes*, and cf. memoranda in F. H. Library, vol. 60, MS.

unanimous resolution approving the purchase of 400,000 bricks for the new Hospital.

Thus excluded from the Charity he had founded, it must have been with very mournful interest that Coram saw the spacious buildings in Guilford Street steadily rising from the ground. Only one letter, hitherto unpublished, with reference to the Foundling subsequent to his rupture with the Committee, appears to be known. It is a little note among the Stowe MSS. (British Museum), 155, 38.

"To Mr Swift the Steward or To Madam the Matron at ye Foundling Hospital in Lambs Conduit Fields.

"Sir or Madam

"be pleased that Mr Cook and His Friends may see your Children and the Hospital &c. in favour of

"Sir and Madam

"Your most obedient humble Servant

"Thomas Coram.

"4th May 1747." [1]

[1] The date is added in a different hand, perhaps that which wrote on p. 3 of the sheet of paper: "This benevolent man gave all he was possessed of to Charitable purposes, & was at last maintained by the Trustees of the Foundling Hospital, & was buried at their Expense."

There is something pathetic in this obsequious request from the founder excluded from the councils of his own Hospital. Coram himself used to visit the Hospital, or its fore-court, to "comfort himself with a sight of the children." [1] He was often to be seen, clad in his well-worn red coat, seated on a bench under the Arcade, and regaling small Foundlings with gingerbread. These little tokens of their benefactor's kindness were purchased with money subscribed, as we shall see, for the giver's own support in the poverty of his old age.[2] There he would sit, often with tears in his eyes. Those little children, munching gingerbread, owed all their well-being to that shabbily dressed, broken-down old man. The great buildings that included their home and school and chapel had been built with money he had raised. And he had no more to do with the policy and administration of the Institution than had the casual visitor.

[1] Mr. Collingwood's reminiscences in F. H. Library, vol. 60, MS.

[2] Collingwood, as above; and F. H. Library, vol. 24, MS.

Assuredly the Governors were badly to blame for letting Coram's opponents have their way. A permanent estrangement from the aged philanthropist ought to have been avoided. Happily there were many who cared for him, and he had light at eventide.

It is outside the scope of this sketch of Coram to trace further the story of the Foundling even in the remaining years of his life. Save for incidental allusions he disappears from its Annals.

But we must not omit a brief reference to a remarkable by-product of Coram's beneficence. The Foundling Hospital has rendered important services to the Arts and has itself been enriched by them. Brownlow is at his best (especially in the *Memoranda*) in dealing with this part of his subject. He may have had his daughter's assistance here, for Miss Emma Brownlow was an artist of no mean merit.

Famous painters, sculptors, and musicians gave their support—often in novel ways—to the new Charity. The first in the field was Hogarth, who considered his portrait of

Coram, painted in 1740,[1] his finest work of its kind. The reproduction of this famous picture, one of the Foundling Hospital art treasures, as our frontispiece is "after" Hogarth, but not too far after to give some idea of the artist's skill. There is a reference to this portrait in Lord Tenterden's verses (*supra*, p. 82), and in the *Scandalizade*—

> "Lo, old Captain Coram, so round in the face,
> And a pair of good chops plump'd up in good case,
> His amiable locks hanging grey on each side,
> To his double-breast coat o'er his shoulder so wide."

The Exhibitions of Painting at the Foundling were the direct and immediate origin of the Royal Academy.[2] Let our next visit to Burlington House remind us of what English Art owes to Thomas Coram.

Music, too, found a very congenial home at the Foundling, where the music has always been a prominent feature of the Chapel services. Handel conducted annual performances of *Messiah* there, bringing in some £7000 to the Charity. Dr. Burney and other

[1] Foundling Hospital *Minutes*, May 14, 1740.

[2] J. E. Hodgson and F. A. Eaton, *The Royal Academy and its Members*, 1905, and elsewhere.

musicians of distinction took an interest in the Foundling, and there was a proposal to establish there a national School of Music on the lines of the Conservatories on the Continent. The children are taught music very efficiently, and a large number of the boys join the Army as bandsmen in the finest Regiments.

But the story of the Foundling and the Arts must be reserved for the Annals of the Hospital.

The Institution is continuing the good work begun so long ago by Thomas Coram. Some features of the system in force have always had their critics—the exclusion of children born in wedlock,[1] the sudden and final separation of mother and child, the difficulty of securing a "home" atmosphere where hundreds are barracked together, and so on.

Some objections may be more apparent than real. In any case the efficiency of any Charity depends largely on its administrators. And the Hospital could not be bettered in

[1] This regulation was relaxed by the Governors for some time during the Napoleonic wars.

this respect. It is highly probable that if Coram were alive to-day he would be more than satisfied with the actual working, and the proved and manifold results, of his philanthropic achievement. For it is surely an achievement. Of some twenty-four thousand infants rescued from death—and a worse fate—the great majority have been reared successfully. They have been fed, and clothed, and fitted for worthy citizenship. A considerable proportion must have married and had families. The number of Coramidæ in the world to-day would people a colony. The Dorset skipper has deserved well of his country.

VII

"AND THOUGH MEN BE SO STRONG THAT THEY COME TO FOUR-SCORE YEARS, YET——"

THERE remains little now to be recorded, for we have watched Coram's voyage of life nearly to its close.

Soon after the Foundling was started, Eunice Coram, his faithful wife for some forty years, died; and the lonely old man now appears to have met with poverty. Perhaps he had let business affairs slide and had not the heart to attend to them with his former energy. But his friends came to the rescue. It was unthinkable that one who had done so much for his country should starve; and a fund for his maintenance was started by Dr. Brocklesby and Sir Sampson Gideon. When Brocklesby broached the matter to him, fearful of offending by suggestions of charity, Coram replied with quiet dignity:

"I have not wasted the little wealth of which I was formerly possessed in self-indulgence and vain expenses, and am not ashamed to confess that, in this my old age, I am poor."[1] The fund raised was sufficient to provide for some modest degree of comfort in his declining years. Well-to-do merchants were the principal subscribers, but one benefactor was the Prince of Wales, who contributed twenty guineas annually; and Brocklesby remarks—as if the fact were noteworthy where Princes are concerned—that he paid the money "with as much punctuality as any of the rest of the subscribers"!

The closing years of the life of the old benefactor—now a beneficiary—were passed in lodgings near Leicester Square.

This was a very different place from what it rather suddenly became in the middle of the nineteenth century. The reference to Leicester Square in the song, "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," would have puzzled a soldier in the eighteenth century. *Que diable faisait-il dans cette galère?*

Where now stands the Empire Music Hall

[1] Brownlow, *History*, etc., p. 32.

was the famous Town house of the old Earls of Leicester, where royal princes set up opposition courts—the "pouting place of princes." Coram died a hundred years before the time when the Alhambra, first named the "Panopticon," was opened with prayer and blessed by Bishops for the popularization of Natural Science. On the site of the Alhambra stood John Hunter's house and museum, with Hogarth as next-door neighbour. Hogarth lived there all the time of Coram's residence in the vicinity. On the west side opposite, Messrs. Puttick & Simpson now occupy the house which, a few years after Coram's death, became the home of Sir Joshua Reynolds. On the south side, just down St. Martin's Street, stood Sir Isaac Newton's house, afterwards occupied by Fanny Burney and her father the great musician—prominent in Foundling Annals. This house has not very long since been demolished.

A prominent Leicester Square resident in Coram's time was his friend Mr. Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons. Other famous eighteenth-century residents were David Hume and Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Thus to the associations of Science, Art, Music, Literature, Politics, and Royalty with Leicester Square were now added those of Coram's many-sided activity. No spot in London has had a more interesting history, and none could more appropriately—from this point of view—be renamed Ichabod.

On Friday, March 29, 1751, Thomas Coram died in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He had expressed a wish to be buried at the Foundling, and here he was laid to rest on Wednesday, April 3, at 5 p.m. It would be interesting to know whether the funeral was attended by any of the clique with whom Captain Coram had disagreed nine years earlier. If so they did not omit the garnishing of their prophet's sepulchre. But there had been changes in the Committee, and a new Treasurer now reigned. A large number of Governors assembled to do honour to the founder of their Hospital, and a great concourse of people thronged the gates. The High Constable of Holborn with six of his officers attended, and a dozen workmen were at the doors of the Chapel to exclude any

persons not wearing mourning attire. In the funeral procession girl Foundlings came first with their matrons, then the boys with theirs. Immediately in front of the coffin the Charter of Incorporation on a velvet cushion was borne by the Secretary, Mr. Harman Verelst, Coram's friend for many years. The pall was supported by six Governors, and the Treasurer followed as chief mourner. This was Mr. Taylor White, whose pleasant countenance we see portrayed in Francis Cotes's fine crayon drawing in the Secretary's Office.

The music was sung by choristers from St. Paul's Cathedral; they had offered voluntarily their services, and Dr. Boyce, one of the most prominent English musicians of the day, conducted them.

One would like to know more of Coram—of his home life, of his inner spiritual life. Much of his character we may know; and no lengthy estimate need be attempted here. If this sketch has not altogether failed in its purpose we shall have formed some impression of a man who in spite of limitations and drawbacks, left his mark on the life of the eighteenth

century. Uneducated, unpolished, not perhaps very conciliatory in his intercourse, for many years a merchant skipper and a working shipwright, he saw what useful things he might do; and he did them. He succeeded in his aims, or many of them, by sheer force of character. He said what he meant, and meant what he said. Men believed in him. His unselfishness was conspicuous: he spent and was spent for the good causes he had at heart. He loved his Church, he loved his country, he loved little children.

Our study must conclude with a perusal of Coram's memorial inscription; it is cut in stone under the Arcade on the south side of the Foundling Chapel—

CAPTAIN THOMAS CORAM,
whose name will never want a monument
so long as this Hospital shall subsist,
was born in the year 1668;
a man eminent in the most eminent virtue,
the love of mankind;
little attentive to his private fortune,
and refusing many opportunities of increasing it,
his time and thoughts were continually employed
in endeavours to promote the public happiness,
both in this kingdom and elsewhere;

particularly in the Colonies of North America ;
and his endeavours were many times crowned
with the desired success.
His unwearied solicitation, for above seventeen years
together
(which would have baffled the patience and industry
of any man less zealous in doing good),
and his application to persons of distinction, of both
sexes,
obtained at length the Charter of the Incorporation
(bearing date the 17th of October, 1739),
for the maintenance and education
of exposed and deserted young children,
by which many thousands of lives
may be preserved to the public, and employed in a frugal
and honest course of industry.
He died the 29th March, 1751, in the 84th year of his age;
poor in worldly estate, rich in good works :
and was buried at his own desire, in the Vault under-
neath this
Chapel (the first there deposited) at the east end thereof,
many of the Governors and other gentlemen
attending the funeral to do honour to his memory.
Reader,
Thy actions will show whether thou art sincere
in the praises thou may'st bestow on him ;
and if thou hast virtue enough to commend his virtues,
forget not to add also the imitation of them.

INDEX

Act for . . . importation of naval stores, 45.
Addison, J., 85.
Aldersgate Street, 95.
Alhambra, 113.
Annals of Christ's Hospital, 84 *n.*
Austin, ——, 40 f.

Bandsmen, Army, 109.
Bedford, Duke of, 98.
Beer (near Lyme Regis), 22.
Bennett, Dr. H. S., 6.
Bent, Rev. N. T., 18, 34 *n.*, 36 *n.*
Berkley (Mass.), 30.
Besant, Sir W., 17.
Bladen, M., 68.
Bodleian Library, 14, 64.
Boston (Mass.), 14, 26 f., 29, 37 f.
Boswell, J., 15.
Boyce, Dr. W., 115.
Bridge, Rev. ——, 33 *n.*
Briggs, J., 35.
British Fleet, The, 25 *n.*
British Museum, 14, 15 f.
Brocklesby, R., 5, 15 f., 41, 79, 94, 98 *n.*, 110 f.
Brockwell, C., 36 *n.*
Brownlow, Emma, 107.
Brownlow, J., 5, 14 f., 16, 36 *n.*, 41 *n.*, 45 *n.*, 63, 68 *n.*, 69, 84, 94 *n.*, 97 *n.*, 98 *n.*, 100 *n.*, 103, 107.
Building of the Ship, The, 28.
Burlington House, 108.
Burney, Dr. C., 108, 113.
Burney, Fanny, 113.
Burt, ——, 30 f.

Cambridge (Mass.), 37.
Cambridge Modern History, 18.
Campbell, D., 75 *n.*
Caritas Anglicana, 19.
Carolina, 45.
Causidicade, 16.
Charity :
  Eighteenth Century, 11–13.
  Elizabethan, 9 f.
  " Joint-stock," 11.
  Laymen's, 12.
  Monastic, 9.
Charity (Enc. Brit.), 19.
Charity Schools, 85.
Chebuctoo Bay, 75.
" Cobb," The, 21 f.
Collingwood, T., 106 *n.*
Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, 74.
Compton, Bp., 38.
Coram, Eunice, 27, 101, 111.
Coram, Thomas :
  Early years, 20–25.
  In America, 26–32.
  Marriage, 27.
  Return to England, 44.
  Wreck of *Seaflower*, 47–62.
  Colonial enterprise, 44–80.

Coram, Thomas—*continued*:
Work for Foundling Hospital, 81–110.
Excluded from Committee, 103 f.
Poverty, 106, 111 f.
Death, 114 f.
Memorial Inscription, 116 f.
Letters, 40 f., 64 f., 78, 101 f., 105.
Petitions: the King, 70–73, 87–93.
Princess Amelia, 93.
Abp. of Canterbury, 26 *n.*, 27 *n.*, 36–39.
Coram in Boston and Taunton. *See under* H. A. Hill.
Coram, William, 21.
Corham family, 20.
armorial bearings, 20 *n.*, 23 *n.*
Corham, Francis, 20 *n.*
Corham, Thomas, 20 *n.*
Cornwallis, Hon. E., 75.
Cotes, Francis, 115.
Coxe, Ven. W., 68 *n.*
"Crown and Anchor," 100.
Cunningham, W., 45 *n.*
Cuxhaven (Coxhaven), 47.

De Castro, J. P., 6.
De Libris, 18.
Dictionary of National Biography, 14, 18.
Dingley, R., 97.
Discourse historical, etc. *See under* Bent.
Dobson, Austin, 15 *n.*, 17 f.

Eaton, F. A., 108 *n.*
Eighteenth Century Vignettes, 17.
Elizabethan Poor Law, 9 f.
Empire Music Hall, 112.
Entick, John, 66.

Featherstone Street, 66.
Foundling Hospital, 6, 12 *n.*, 13–15, 28, 82–110.
Library, 20 *n.*, 70 *n.*, 88, 104 *n.*, 106 *n.*
Friendly Admonition to Drinkers of Brandy, 35.
From Seed to Harvest, 30 *n.*

Garrick, David, 67.
Gentleman's Magazine, 17.
Georgia, 45, 64 f., 67.
Gideon, Sir S., 111.
Goodman's Fields, 65 f.
Gravesend, 65.
Gray, B. Kirkman, 11 *n.*, 12 *n.*, 18 f.
Greenwood, F. W. P., 18.
Growth of English Industry, etc., 45 *n.*
Guardian, The, 84–87.
Guilford Street, 84, 105.

Halifax (N.S.), 75 f., 77.
Hallett, T., 21.
Hamburg, 47 *seq.*
Handel, G. F., 108.
Hanover, 47.
Hanway, Jonas, 97.
Harben, H. A., 66 *n.*
Harburg, 48.
Harvard, 37.
Heberden, W., 15 *n.*
Helderenbergh, The, 23.
Heligoland, 62.
Heriot, ——, 38.
Herring, Abp., 37.
Hill, H. A., 18, 28 *n.*, 29 *n.*, 35 *n.*, 102 *n.*

Historical Collections of American Church, 18, 31, 33 *n.*, 36.
History and Objects of the Foundling Hospital. See under J. Brownlow.
History and Survey of London, etc., 66 *n.*
History . . . of Dorset, 17.
History of English Philanthropy, 11 *n.*, 19.
History of King's Chapel in Boston, 18.
History of Nova Scotia, 69 *n.*
Hodges, Rev. Dr. F. P., 23 *n.*
Hodges, Rev. Dr. G., 6.
Hodgson, J. E., 108 *n.*
Hogarth, W., 17, 82, 98, 107 f., 113.
Hospitals, etc. :
  Female Orphan Asylum, 12.
  Foundling. *See under* F.
  London, 66.
  Magdalen, 12 *n.*, 66.
  St. George's, 11 *n.*
Hume, David, 113.
Hunter, Dr. John, 113.
Hutchins, J., 17.

Indians, North American, 39–43.

Jackson, C., 18.
Jenkins, Rev. C., 6.
Johnson, Samuel, 15.
Joyful News to Batchelors and Maids, 95.

King's Chapel, Boston (Mass.), 18, 29, 31, 33, 37 f.
King's College, London, 5.
Kinterbury, 20 *n.*

Lambeth Palace Library, 14.
Lamb's Conduit Fields, 100.
Lawrence, Sir T., 113.
Lecky, W. E. H., 12 *n.*
Lectures on the Catechism, 35.
Leicester Square, 112–114.
Liesching, H. S., 6.
Lincoln, P. C., 30 *n.*
Loch, C. S., 19.
London Advertiser, 13, 17
London Evening Post, 17.
London Magazine, 17.
Longfellow, H. W., 28.
Lyme Regis, 17, 20–23.

Magdalen Hospital : the Story of a great Charity, 66 *n.*, 84 *n.*
Malcolm, J. P., 67 *n.*
Manaton's Rooms, 100.
Manners and Customs of London, 67 *n.*
Marine Society, 12 *n.*
Mead, Dr. R., 98.
Memoirs . . . Royal Navy, 18.
Memoranda, or Chronicles of the Foundling. See under J. Brownlow.
Messiah, The, 108.
Miles, Rev. ——, 33 *n.*
Mills, ——, 18.
Monasteries, 9.
Monmouth, Duke of, 23.
Murdoch, B., 69.
Myers, Rev. Canon, 6.

Napoleonic Wars, 109 *n.*
Nesbitt, Dr., 104.
"New Style" Act, 37 *n.*
Newcastle, Duke of, 78.
Newfoundland, 46.
Newman, Henry, 64–66.
Newton, Dr. A. P., 6.
Newton, Sir Isaac, 113.
Nichols, R. H., 6.

Nichols and Stevens, 17.
Nonconformists, 29, 37 f.
Notes and Queries, 64.
Nova Scotia, 69–77.
Nova Scotia (Campbell), 75 *n.*
Nova Scotia, History of (Murdoch), 69 *n.*

Observations on the Foundling Hospital, 100 *n.*, 103 *n.*
Oglethorpe, Gen., 13, 64 f.
Onslow, A. (The Speaker), 36, 97, 113.
Orphan Asylum, 12 *n.*
Ottery St. Mary, 20.
Ovid, 85.

Pearce, Ven. E. H., 84 *n.*
Pearse, Thos., 48, 62.
Pearson, Henry, 48 *seq.*
Pelagius, Porcupinus, 16.
Penny London Post, 17.
Pepys, S., 18.
Phipps, Sir W., 27.
Portus, Garnet, 19.
Potter, Abp., 37.
"Pouting Place of Princes," 113.
Prescott Street, 65 f.
Price, Roger, 33.
Private Virtue and Publick Spirit displayed, etc., 16.
Puttick and Simpson, 113.

Rambler, The, 84 *n.*
Resin, 45.
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 113.
Risdon, Tristram, 20 *n.*
Roberts, Geo., 17.
Robinson, C. N., 25 *n.*
Roderick Random, 24.
Rotherhithe, 82 f.
Royal Academy and its Members, 108 *n.*
Royal Colonial Institute, 5.

St. Thomas' Church, Taunton (Mass.), 35 f.
Scandalizade, 16, 76 f., 96, 108.
Seaflower, The, 47–63.
Secker, Abp., 36.
Select Discourses, etc., 35.
Select Tracts relating to the Colonies, 65.
"Ship" Tavern, The, 67.
Sloane, Sir Hans, 97, 101 f.
Smith, Rev. ——, 101.
Smugglers, 22.
Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 64.
Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 26 *n.*, 28 *n.*, 33, 38 f., 64, 67.
Digest of Records, 39 *n.*
Statute of Charitable Uses, 10.
Statutes at Large, 44 *n.*
Stoughton College, 37.
Stowe MSS., 105.
Survey of Devon, 20 *n.*

Tar, 26, 44 f.
Tar Company of Sweden, 44.
Taunton (Mass.), 27–36.
Taylor, Rev. M., 6, 32 *n.*
Tench, Sir F., 101.
Tennyson, Alfred, 43 *n.*
Tenterden, Lord, 81 *n.*, 108.
Thornton, John, 97.
"Tipperary," 112.
Trinity House, 46.
Turpentine, 45.

Verelst, H., 67, 115.
Vincent de Paul, St., 84.
Virginia, 26.

Wager, Sir C., 68.
Wait, Eunice. *See under* Eunice Coram.
Walford, E., 17.
Walpole, H. (Lord Wolterton), 68.
Walpole, Sir Robert, Life of, 68 *n.*
Wesley, Rev. John, 67.
White, Taylor, 115.
Whitehall Evening Post, 17.
Whitney, Rev. Dr. J. P., 6.
Willson, Rev. W. N., 6.
Wintle, W. S., 15.
Wolfall, ——, 38.

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